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"*Helen Keller*," said H. G. WELLS, "*is one of the two most interesting minds in America.*" Anne Sullivan Macy is the teacher who made Helen Keller's development possible.

Here is her story told for the first time. And it is a story almost as incredible as Helen's own. It begins with a little girl who grew blind among the Irish Famine refugees in Massachusetts and was finally thrown away into the oblivion of a great poorhouse. It tells how the doctors and authorities there gave her up as hopeless and how she was yet able to pull herself out of it; how she learned to read with her fingers at the age of fourteen, how a miraculous operation gave her back part of her sight, and how she learned to read all over again, this time with her eyes; how through Charles Dickens indirectly and Alexander Graham Bell directly she became Helen's teacher; and how, in the face of all opposition, she led her pupil to triumph and made her one of the great world figures of our time.

The book makes clear the intricate and singularly beautiful relationship between the two women, shows where Helen stops and the teacher begins, and discusses in some detail the various attacks upon Helen.

The author has been an intimate friend of Mrs. Macy and Helen Keller for many years. She has been engaged in writing this book for the past seven years.

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ANNE SULLIVAN MACY AND HELEN KELLER,
1893

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Anne Sullivan Macy

THE STORY BEHIND HELEN KELLER

BY NELLA BRADDY

1933

Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.

Garden City, New York

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For

HELEN KELLER

Who knows what I hoped

it would be

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Introduction

"*You told me once in a moment of deep sorrow,*" Helen Keller wrote to her teacher, Mrs. Anne Sullivan Macy, in 1916, when Mrs. Macy was in Porto Rico, "*that you thought you would write the story of your life, for it might help to clear up misunderstandings that would otherwise follow you to the grave. I feel sure that, if you write this book, I shall know you deeply for the first time. That seems a strange thing for me to say, does it not, when we have lived so close to each other during thirty years. Yet so it is. I have always realized that there are chapters in the book of your personality which remain sealed to me.*"

It is an irreparable loss to the world that Mrs. Macy did not write the book while she still had sight enough for the task. There are many reasons why she did not. In the first place, her sight has never been good, and what she has had she has given to Helen. In the second place, she has spent her life since the age of fourteen trying to forget what happened up to that time. She has not been successful, but she has never willingly dwelt upon those harrowing years. When people have come asking for the story of her life (and during the years many have come) she has pointed to Helen. Helen, in her opinion, is all the biography, all the monument she needs or desires.

I am ashamed to say that I cannot remember the first time I met Mrs. Macy. It was, we both think, some time in 1922. But, like everyone else, I can remember distinctly the first time I met Helen. That was in 1924. During the years that followed, while Helen was at work on *My Religion* and *Midstream*, I was with her. Mrs. Macy and I used to spend long hours together in the little office on the second floor of their house in Forest Hills, New York, listening to Helen's typewriter in the attic above us, and waiting for her to bring down what she had written so that we could piece it into the manuscript which lay

on the table before us. We talked of everything—Shakespeare and Bacon (both women are ardent Baconites), Sacco and Vanzetti (both are ardent laborites), the lecture tours, the Kellers, Hollywood, and Helen. On the days when I was adroit we talked of Mrs. Macy, and it was on one of these that she told for the first time the story of her years in Tewksbury. Even Helen had not known it.

Mrs. Macy, then, is the chief source for the material in this book. She had hoped that it would never be written, but long before I knew her, friends of hers had told her that, with or without her consent, the story would be told some day, perhaps after her death. A large part of it could be dug out of records. What she had done was too significant to pass unnoticed, however modest her own estimate of it might be. Once one who had loved her threatened to write it, and while he never did, and perhaps never intended to, the threat bothered her a little.

No one, as she was well aware, really knew the story. Mrs. Macy has met as many people and as many different kinds of people, probably, as anyone else in the world, but she has had few close friends, and, unlike weaker women, she has never felt the need of a confidant to relieve her overcharged heart. She has the power of arousing passionate devotion, and those who have cherished her have cherished her deeply, but she has seldom encouraged them. The course of her life has been too direct to permit the amiable loiterings by the wayside that fall to the lot of the rest of us. She has allowed herself to love intensely only one person, and she has been content to remain in the shadow of that person.

The one bright thing in her life, as she sees it, is Helen. This is another reason why she has never wished anyone to write about her. She has always been afraid that somehow or another she might be elevated above Helen. On one or two occasions this has happened. A man may not be a hero to his valet, but a lady may be a heroine to her handmaiden, and Helen's teacher has always believed in Helen's greatness. It is impossible to be near

Helen without believing in it, though there may be many different interpretations of what constitutes it. But this, as I have had to remind myself a thousand times in writing it, is not a book about Helen. Her story has already been told, incomparably, by herself. It is time now to talk about her teacher.

Mrs. Macy has always been careless about keeping records. Indeed, one day when I asked about something she had owned in 1912, her secretary, Miss Polly Thomson, replied, "I don't think Teacher" (this is Helen's name for Mrs. Macy and all her friends have adopted it) "has anything now that she had in 1912." Many important letters and documents have been lost; by some miracle, many others have been preserved.

But even if Mrs. Macy had kept everything she should have kept, there would still have been difficulties—the inevitable difficulties which confront one who tries to draw quivering life into the bleak and rigid confines of words. "The most conscientious biographer," she said to me one day, "cannot tell the whole truth about his subject, because the subject himself has forgotten so much that was once impressive. He sees things differently; from day to day the aspect of life changes, what was important yesterday seems trivial today. A little while, and significant events and experiences take on the vagueness of a dream, thrilling episodes fade into silence, the precious hour of love is followed by pitiful speech, the tremulously whispered promise by sighs and tears. The flames leaping high with exultation turn to red ashes and smoulder out because less and less frequently tended; the years pass; memories become dull aches. . . . Our early recollections of childhood are very similar to dreams—they are pictures. When we try to put them into words we must make connections and fill gaps. Time and place are lost, but an image remains. The truth of a matter is not what I tell you about it, but what you divine in regard to it."

May the biographer repeat that last sentence to the reader? "The truth of a matter is not what I tell you about it, but what you divine in regard to it."

Next to Mrs. Macy, the most valuable source for the book is Helen. In Forest Hills, in the Adirondacks, in Brittany, in England, in Scotland, wherever she has happened to be during the last seven years (this book was begun seven years ago) she has always been ready to copy for me whatever her teacher has spelled into her hand concerning herself. She typed out of Braille the letters which Mrs. Macy wrote to her in 1916–17 from Porto Rico, and copied her own letters to Mrs. Macy. This is the only extensive correspondence that ever passed between them, for the four months that Mrs. Macy spent on that enchanted island make up the only appreciable length of time that they have been separated since that memorable third of March in 1887 when Annie Sullivan arrived in Tuscumbia, Alabama, and met Helen Keller for the first time. Most of all, Helen has kept alive her teacher's interest in the project. I think she never welcomed the inception of a book as she welcomed this one. She always wished to write a book about Mrs. Macy herself, but she knew that she could never make it anything but an extended song of praise. A sweeter Annie Sullivan would have gone into these pages if Helen had written them—too sweet for Annie's realistic, uncompromising soul.

Third in order must be placed the other member of the Forest Hills trio, Miss Polly Thomson, secretary to Mrs. Macy and Helen, who has lived in the house with them since 1914. Tireless and eager, she has helped in many ways, not the least of which was spelling into Helen's hands the entire completed manuscript while it was still in typewriting.

Like nearly everyone else who writes a book which purports to be true, I find myself unable to render thanks to all who have helped me without writing another book to set down their names. But there are some others who must not pass unnoticed. These are:

Helen's sister, Mildred [Mrs. Warren Tyson], of Montgomery, Alabama, and Helen's cousin, Mrs. Leila Lassiter, of Selma, Alabama.

Mrs. Macy's cousin, Miss Teresa Sullivan, of Springfield, Massachusetts.

Miss Cora Newton and Miss Mary Moore, Mrs. Macy's teachers at the Perkins Institution, and her schoolmates there, Miss Lenna Swinerton, Miss Julia Burnham, and Miss Lydia Hayes, who is now head of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind.

Miss Nina Rhoades, daughter of Mr. John Harsen Rhoades, whose acquaintance with Mrs. Macy began in the fall of 1888 when she

visited the Perkins Institution, and the director, Mr. Michael Anagnos, asked her if she would like to see the eighth wonder of the world, meaning Helen.

Mr. Edward E. Allen, another friend of theirs since 1888. He was a young instructor at the Perkins Institution when Annie Sullivan first brought Helen North with her. Later he became director of the school, and in this capacity gave me access to the letters and documents there concerning Mrs. Macy and her pupil.

Mr. John D. Wright and the late Dr. Thomas Humason, directors of the Wright-Humason Oral School where Helen was a pupil from 1894 through 1896.

Mr. Edward [Ned] Holmes and Mrs. Thurston Vaughan [Villa Curran] who have been intimate friends of Helen's and Mrs. Macy's for more than thirty years.

Mr. Charles F. F. Campbell, director of the Detroit League for the Handicapped, another friend of thirty years' standing.

Dr. William Allan Neilson, president of Smith College, who knew them best when Helen was a student at Radcliffe and he was a young instructor there.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Sidney Smith of Washington, D. C. Mr. Smith, now chief Alaskan geologist with the U. S. Geological Survey, was also an instructor at Radcliffe when Helen was there. His wife, at that time Miss Lenore Kinney, used sometimes to take Helen to her classes to relieve Mrs. Macy.

Dr. Francis Trevelyan Miller, who wrote the scenario for Helen's motion picture, *Deliverance*. He was with them in Hollywood in 1918, the year of its production.

The Rev. Paul Sperry, pastor of the Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian) in Washington, D. C. Mr. Sperry was responsible for Helen's book, *My Religion*.

Mr. Leon Gordon, the Russian artist who painted Helen's portrait for *Good Housekeeping* in 1931. He particularly understands Mrs. Macy, and I hope will some day do a portrait of her.

Dr. Conrad Berens of New York City, to whose skill Mrs. Macy is indebted for the little sight that remains to her.

My warmest thanks are also due to the following:

Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert Grosvenor of Washington, D. C., for permission to reprint the extracts from the letters of Mrs. Grosvenor's father, Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. It is because of the great interest which Dr. Bell and his secretary, Mr. John Hitz, took in Helen's education that such complete records of it remain in the Volta

Bureau (founded by Dr. Bell) in Washington, D. C. Much as Dr. Bell loved Helen, he was more interested in the methods by which she was taught, methods which he believed would be of incalculable benefit to all the deaf.

Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine for permission to use the hitherto unpublished letters of Mark Twain. No one of his generation had a higher opinion of Helen and her teacher than had Mark Twain, and no one expressed his opinion more felicitously—the miracle Helen, the miracle-maker, Annie Sullivan.

Mrs. Edward Bok for permission to use her husband's letter to "Miss Sullivan." It was Mr. Bok who discovered Helen as an author.

Mr. Carl Sandburg, a poet who understands "the rarely beautiful and intricate friendship of Mrs. Macy and Helen Keller," for permission to use the letter which he wrote to Helen in 1922.

Dr. A. Edward Newton of Philadelphia, who once insisted (successfully) that Mrs. Macy accept an honor which he and some others wished to confer upon her for permission to quote some of the paragraphs in which he insisted.

Mr. F. N. Doubleday for permission to reprint the paragraphs from Dr. Frederick Tilney's article, "The Mind of Helen Keller," which was first published in *Personality*, October, 1928. In 1927–28 Dr. Tilney made a scientific analysis of Helen's sensory equipment, the most complete survey of its kind that has been made up to the present. I helped him with this. Mr. Doubleday again for permission to quote Helen's letter written from Cornwall in 1930.

Doubleday, Doran & Company for permission to quote Helen's books: *The Story of My Life*, *Out of the Dark*, and *Midstream*.

The Annual Reports of the directors of the Perkins Institution, especially those written by Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, teacher of Laura Bridgman, and by his son-in-law and successor, Michael Anagnos, have been invaluable. So also the letters which Mr. Anagnos wrote Mrs. Macy and Helen. Practically all of them (nearly one hundred in neat copper-plate handwriting) have been preserved. The present director of this famous school, Mr. Gabriel Farrell, was good enough to lend photographs of Dr. Howe, Mr. Anagnos, and Laura Bridgman.

There are two organizations in the United States devoting themselves respectively to the needs of the deaf and the blind to which everyone must turn who plans to write about either group. The first is The American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf in Washington, D. C. It now controls the Volta Bureau,

and I wish especially to thank the superintendent of the Bureau, Miss Josephine Timberlake. The second is The American Foundation for the Blind in New York City. Its president, Mr. M. C. Migel, and his secretary, Mrs. Amelia Bond, its director Mr. Robert Irwin, and its field director, Mr. Charles Hayes, have all been most helpful.

Mrs. Macy's recollections of her years in Tewksbury have been supplemented by *Butler's Book* (Benjamin F. Butler) and by the Annual Reports of the Inspectors of the Massachusetts State Almshouse, 1869–81. Of the other books which have been useful only a few can be listed by name. It is lack of space and not lack of gratitude that causes the omission of the others. Some of the most helpful were *The Journals and Letters of Samuel Gridley Howe*, edited by his daughter, Laura E. Richards, and *Laura Bridgman*, by Mrs. Richards; *Laura Bridgman*, by Maud Howe and Florence Howe Hall, and *The Life and Education of Laura D. Bridgman*, by Mary Swift Lamson; all of Helen Keller's books, *The Story of My Life*, *The World I Live In*, *Out of the Dark*, *My Religion*, and *Midstream; The Deaf Child* by Dr. James Kerr Love of Glasgow, Scotland; *From Homer to Helen Keller*, by Dr. Richard Slayton French; *Dynamite*, by Mr. Louis Adamic; and *Socialism in America* by Mr. John Macy.

Many other acknowledgments are made in the course of the story. Except where the contrary is indicated, the opinions expressed are mine, and no one else should be held responsible for them.

NELLA BRADDY

Garden City, Long Island.

CHAPTER I

On the Edge of the Famine

"She would be so pretty if it were not for her eyes." Out of the vagueness that enwraps the beginnings of Annie Sullivan those are the first words that she can remember. The words are completely disembodied, and all her efforts to attach them to a person have failed. This may be because half-blind children have so little memory for faces and so much for voices, but she thinks, from the way the words are scorched into her mind, that perhaps there were many different voices at many different times, all blended now into one unhappy memory. There has never been a time since, that, sooner or later, no matter what was said of her, the dreadful thought was not added. What might she have done, what might she have been—but for her eyes.

The eyes were good when she was born, and it was not her fault, nor truly anybody's fault, that they did not remain good. She was a small atom tossing on the edge of a great movement, and it was inherent in the movement that such things should happen. Her father and mother had come from Limerick, Ireland, just seventeen or eighteen years after the Great Famine of 1847 which set in motion one of the most extensive migratory movements known to human history. Annie's mother, Alice Chloesy, was two years old when the famine came, her father, Thomas Sullivan, perhaps a little older. They had both been brought up on stories of starving children clinging to mothers already dead, of men in their madness eating grass by the roadside, of cholera on transport ships, and other horrors too lurid and too terrible to be set down in print.

Like most of their countrymen who sought the United States during the years which followed the famine, Thomas and Alice Sullivan brought nothing—they had nothing to bring. They had money enough to pay their passage, but it had not come from Ireland: it was sent to them from New England. They were both Roman Catholics, and Irish Roman Catholics had been persecuted so long that Daniel O'Connell said he could always tell them from other Irish by the way they slunk along the streets. Neither had ever been to school; neither could read or write, and neither had been trained to do skilful labour of any sort, in all of which they were no worse off than thousands of their companions most of whom in the beginning made their livings by digging ditches and canals and building railroads and working as hired men on farms belonging to other people.

Thomas, as a matter of fact, had an advantage, in that he knew exactly where he was going and almost exactly what he was going to do. The money which brought him—steerage passage at that time cost about twenty-five dollars—came from his older brother John, who was working on a "Yankee" farm in a village called Feeding Hills, not far from Springfield, Mass.

There was already quite a settlement of Irish there. Most of the refugees from the Emerald Isle during this period stayed somewhere near the Atlantic coast, dropped there, one writer has it, "like tired migratory birds." Three fourths of them stayed in New York, Pennsylvania, and New England, and of those in New England, the majority were in Massachusetts, where the native Puritans gave them a frigid and contemptuous reception. The New Englander had never been cordial to anyone not like himself, nor was he ever able to understand, any more than the old Englander had been, the brilliant, joyous, irrational, unmanageable Celt. It is an accident of geography that certain New England opinions were not spoken on the floor of the House of Commons. The Irish were, say the children of William Lloyd Garrison, "the lowest class of the white

population at the North." "They were," adds Henry Cabot Lodge, "an idle, quarrelsome, and disorderly class, always at odds with the government." What the established New Englander wanted from them was cheap, ignorant labour. Anything else was an impertinence.

Thomas got work almost immediately either on the Smith or on the Taylor farm—he worked on first one and then the other intermittently throughout his fretted sojourn in Feeding Hills—and he and his wife went to live with several other families, all Irish, in a shabby old Colonial house called, in derision, the Castle, where, on April 14, 1866, a child was born who later was taken to the cathedral in Springfield and christened Joanna. Practically speaking, the name was for christening purposes only. The child was called Annie.

The young mother must have been lonely before Annie came. She was little more than a girl herself, and she was in a strange country. What relatives she had, and we are not sure of any, were in Limerick. Her husband, it is true, was surrounded by Sullivans. He had his brothers John and Dan, his half-brother Jimmie, his sister Ellen, and an assortment of cousins. She had no one, and it is a charming tribute to her that the Sullivans, who in time came to be bitterly ashamed of her husband, always loved her. The old men and women around Feeding Hills remember her as slender and laughing, "a person people loved to be with." Her dark hair and brown eyes and her gentleness, so in contrast with Thomas's ruddy countenance and robustious behaviour, gave Annie the idea, when she thought of it years later, that her mother might not be Irish at all but French. There were a good many French Canadians at work on the New England farms. But later still she learned that her mother was as Irish as her father. It was a comfort to know this, for Alice Sullivan was a lonely girl, and it must have given her no small sense of security to know that she was among her own and to be able, on Sunday, to go to church and worship with people who, like herself, had

lived in Limerick or whose names and ancestors, at least, had come from there—the Sheas and the Fitzgeralds and the Kelleys and the Barrys and the Carrolls.

What these Irish did was not chronicled in the local papers. Close to the soil they lived out their lives, and when they were done the soil received them again, and there was no record of anything except what might go on a tombstone, if there was a tombstone. In the case of Thomas's wretched little family, it so happened that there were no tombstones, nor anything but a few bleak lines in the ledgers that belonged to the town and to the church. The big disaster from which the other disasters came, or seemed to come, was never written down, and there is no sure way of telling when it happened. It was while Annie was small, for her recollection is confused, and it must have been after the second baby came, for this second little girl, Ellen, named after Thomas's sister, was, so far as we can tell, perfectly healthy when she was born. At any rate, while Alice was still young (indeed she died long before she was old) she fell against the stove, the pipe disjointed, the stove plunged forward—and she never was able to walk again except on crutches. She already had tuberculosis, or developed it very soon after this, and the disease and the lameness aggravated each other; but the old people at Feeding Hills, where her memory has become a dim sweet legend, speak of her moving blithely about on crutches, merry still.

The merriness had faded, however—for even the stoutest heart has its breaking point—by the time Annie was three or four years old; in the vivid pictures of her which remain in Annie's mind Alice Sullivan is not laughing. She is lying in bed or sitting in a chair propped up on pillows, and she is very white and very thin and very tired.

We can guess that Thomas was beginning to get a toe-hold in the new country when the accident happened, for he had moved from the Castle and was living in a tenant's cottage on the Taylor estate. But Thomas had neither philosophical nor

material equipment with which to meet his new difficulties. He was a rough-and-ready out-of-door Irishman who knew only one way to handle trouble, and that was to drown it. When he could find nothing stronger he took hard cider sprinkled through with red pepper, and when he brought his cronies to the house there was a flash of Alice's old manner as she tried to entertain them.

She was hobbling about on her crutches now, and was no longer able to take care of a home. She was ill and lame, and there was a child coming. Always there was a child coming. Jimmie, the third in line, was born on January 14, 1869, with a tubercular hip.

Neighbours helped wash the clothes and clean the house and cook the meals, but they came irregularly. They were hard-working women who had to take care of their own houses and help their men in the tobacco fields. Some of them took in washing, some of them had places as maids in "Yankee" houses; Aunt Ellen, who was a little more elegant than the others, took in sewing. All of them were struggling desperately —it was the Puritan struggle in a different tempo—but because they dropped their own problems for a few minutes to look after Alice's, hunger is not among the unhappy memories of Annie's childhood. In fact, she has kept three vivid, agreeable, gustatory impressions. The Taylor girl once invited her into the big house and gave her a piece of apple pie with sugar sprinkled on top. On another occasion, when was she taking her father his dinner in a bucket—this was later, when she was living in a poorer house farther up the road—she came upon the most extraordinary performance on the lawn in front of the Methodist church, where fine ladies were seated at little tables while other fine ladies moved gracefully about among them bearing dishes. It was a strawberry festival. Annie put the bucket down and gazed rapturously at the scene. Presently one of the fine ladies detached herself from the others and brought her a dish of strawberries with cream on them.

She sat down on the curb and lapped it up. At home the only delicacy was a brown syrup with mustard in it which was kept on the back of the stove to cure colds. A bit of it now and then had the value of candy to one who did not, at that time, know what candy was.

But these impressions are scattered over eight years, and we must go back. What Ellen suffered from the squalor which surrounded her we do not know, for she died of a malignant fever when she was five years old; but all the rest of Annie's life was affected by it, for it was in the midst of it and because of it that she developed that destructive granular inflammation of the eyes known as trachoma. This happened so early that her first conscious memory is the one of which we have spoken; "She would be so pretty if it were not for her eyes." She was rather pretty anyway. She was round and chubby and pink like a cherub, with abundant dark hair like her mother's, and luminous blue eyes—only the eyes were clouded.

Her mother was distressed about the eyes. "Wash them," a neighbour told her, "in geranium water." And Annie can still see her mother's long thin fingers plucking the leaves from a geranium that bloomed in the window. There was not much that the mother could do. Doctors were expensive, and perhaps the eyes would get better anyway. It might be that the Blessed Virgin would intervene.

It was not only Annie's eyes that distressed her mother. Annie was not then, nor ever after, what might be called a good child, nor, as many people were to learn, easy to manage. She was blindly and passionately rebellious in the way a child is so likely to be who is surrounded by unhappinesses too big for him to handle. No one ever tried to understand her, and the only way her father ever tried to control her was by beating her. This brutal treatment—the beatings were so severe that her mother used to help her hide—might have cowed a different person, but not Annie. The indomitable woman whom the world was later to know came from an indomitable child.

She herself can remember some of her tantrums. Once when a neighbour left her to look after some loaves of bread which she had put in the oven she burned her hand and dashed to the floor and ruined several of the loaves. Across the years she can still hear her mother's voice crying, "Annie, Annie, Annie!" Bread was precious then. Once in anger she rocked her little sister clear out of her cradle and gave her a cruel scar on the forehead. She got one of her father's whippings in return, but the whippings did not seem to do much good. Once again, on a winter afternoon, a neighbour came with a little girl in white shoes and white mittens, soft like little rabbits. Annie wanted the white mittens intensely, but the neighbour had brought red ones for her. "Aren't they pretty, Annie?" her mother asked. "No, I don't want them," she cried. Rage took possession of her, and she threw them into the fire. "What a terrible child!" the neighbour said, with conviction. "What a terrible child!"

No cultural influences entered into Annie's life during her childhood. The contempt of their neighbours as well as their own poverty kept the Irish to themselves. They might have moved ahead faster if their contact with their politer neighbours had been somewhat different, but rapid progress can hardly be expected of a poor and ignorant people who see no one but other people as poor and ignorant as themselves.

Nothing was ever read to her, but her father, who was jolly and agreeable when he was drunk enough to be unworried and sober enough to be lucid, told her stories of the Little People, and of the fairy folk who lurked in the tops of trees to throw things down upon whoever passed below, of the will-o'-the-wisp who led travellers astray over the marshes at night and of the toothless crone who used to waylay him as he went to and from his work. Sometimes he recited Gaelic poetry which she could not understand, but she loved the mournful sound of it. He talked of Ireland and told her how the Little People had carried him away in a sack when he was a baby,

and how they stole his mother's cow and brought it back when she cooked a pig for them. He warned her that if she ever met a woman walking with a crooked stick she must cross herself: the devil's hand was in it. He was quite serious when he told these stories, and when Annie asked him where the Little People were, he assured her that some of them were under the flat stone in front of the house, and she had evidence beyond her father's word that this was true, for the Taylor girl, who used to go by the house every day on her way to school, flaunted a parasol too divinely blue and beautiful to have come from a mortal source. Annie tried to lift up the stone so as to have a private word with the Little People on her own account, but it was too heavy.

This Taylor girl, goddess in her own way, once asked Annie to go to the school with her, not as a pupil—she was not old enough and could not see well enough—but as a guest. It was a romantic adventure, for while the school was only a school, ghosts lived next to it in a little dark house with flag lilies around it, and the old woman who came to chase them out when they tried to steal the lilies was a witch.

Annie used to be afraid of the ghosts and of the Little People. On one especial night when she and Jimmie and Ellen were huddled into a back room she was sure that the Little People had come, and thought, from the screams she heard, that they were after a woman in the next room—Annie thought the woman might be her mother but she was not sure. Shadows played weirdly against the walls from a kerosene lamp, and the three children crouched under the covers. Strangers were all over the house, and noise and confusion. Finally the screaming gave place to a small wailing cry, and a woman came to tell Annie that she had a baby sister. Much relieved, Annie crawled up for air. The child was a girl, and she was called Mary.

Of all the things that Annie loved in those desolate years the one that had her brightest and most particular affection

was a sacred heart picture of the Virgin which hung above the bed in the front room. She temporarily lost faith in the Virgin, however, when she let go a dove which Annie had left in her care when she went to take her father his dinner, but this did not disturb her affection for the picture. Yet a curious thing happened.

Once when her father lay in bed, because in reaping wheat on Mr. Taylor's farm he had cut his leg with a scythe, Annie climbed up beside him to hear more about the Little People. Accidentally she struck something against the picture. When she saw that it horrified her father she did it again and again until he held her hands to make her stop. Her father could not understand her, nor could she understand herself, for she loved the picture and would not for the world have injured it. Yet she could not help throwing things at it. Always she was like that.

It was somewhat in the same spirit that she threw whatever she could lay hand on at the small mirror her father used for shaving and smashed it. "You little devil!" She had been called a little devil before, but always until now in anger, not in fear. "You little devil! Look what you've brought to this house. Bad luck. Bad luck for seven years!"

The sequence to these memories is uncertain, but there came a time when the Thomas Sullivans were poorer than ever in a house with long flights of steps—not the house on the Taylor farm. In the room next to the one in which her mother lay ill, four men, one of them her father, sat under a lamp gambling for a turkey hanging on the wall. The men were boisterous and convivial, singing raucously in praise of the Little Brown Jug. Annie went in to watch them and reached out an inquisitive hand for one of the cards. Someone slapped it; someone else patted it. She went back to her mother. The other children were asleep. The night wore on, and the lamp burned low. The house shook with rowdy laughter and thumping feet, and the sick woman begged the child to ask the men

to leave. Annie's father, very drunk by that time, struck her sharply on the cheek. One of the men started towards the door, lurched and fell. The child, her face smarting, hoped passionately that he would die, but he rose unsteadily to his feet, took the turkey, and went away. The others staggered after him. The lamp guttered out. Her father stood by the open doorway through which an icy wind was blowing. Escape lay beyond the door, and for a frantic moment the little girl thought she would take it. But the stocky figure of a red-faced Irishman with reddish hair and a reddish beard stood in the way, and she did not go.

That was the first Christmas she remembered; and that is all of it she remembers.

During the last sad months of Alice Sullivan's life three entries went into the town records.

Ellen, or Nellie, the second little girl, died in May, 1873, the record says of brain fever, but the Sullivans thought it was a form of the hoof and mouth disease that was ravaging horses that year. In June a son was born whose hold on life was so faint that two months later, when the town took pen in hand to write him down, his death was attributed simply to lack of vitality. Thomas Sullivan carried the coffin away on his knees, and Annie was glad to see it go. The baby had spent most of his two months crying: it was a relief to be rid of him.

Alice's own vitality was nearly gone. The brown burial robe, the gift of one Catherine Fitzgerald, late of Limerick, was in the house. Mrs. Fitzgerald had forehandedly bought it for herself, but knowing there was no money here for one, she had given it away. She was always doing this. No one knows how many burial robes she bought for herself and gave away. Annie found the one intended for her mother and examined it curiously, not knowing what it was. But her mother knew.

The Sullivans were by this time in a boarding house again. The day came when a priest entered to administer holy unction.

The devil was invited to choke all children who lifted their voices above a whisper, and the house was filled with people moving purposefully about. Alice Chloesy lay on a mattress very still, clothed in the brown burial robe with the white letters on the breast, her tired transparent hands crossed, her black hair drawn smoothly back from her small white face. A green ribbon was around her throat.

Jimmie and Mary were sobbing, and Jimmie was sitting on his father's knee. Annie was not crying. None of those weeping around her seemed to belong to her or she to them. It was a pageant, and she was looking on. No emotion flamed up. She never had an emotion connected with her mother, only pictures, and all of the pictures, except the final one, were to her, even as a little girl, very disturbing.

There had been no money for the burial robe; there was none for the funeral. Thomas had never made more than a pittance on the farms, and that had gone partly, we may hope, for doctors for Alice. Some of it had gone for food and some of it (there was never much) had gone for drink. The other Sullivans had long since lost patience with their shiftless relative. The town helped defray the funeral expenses, and the interment would have taken place in the potters' field if Mrs. Fitzgerald had not offered room in a lot of hers in an old cemetery from which most of the bodies had been moved into a new one. This at least is the way the story goes. No one truly knows where Alice is buried nor whether she lay beside her children or not.

All the neighbours came to the funeral and stayed at the house for a while afterwards. Annie went, and so did Jimmie and Mary, sitting in a black carriage with their father next to the hearse. It was on January 19th and bitter cold.

The first thing that happened as they set off down the road was a scramble between Jimmie and Annie for the best place to watch the horses from. Neither had ever been in a carriage before, and both wanted a front seat. Jimmie cried out that Annie had hurt him—very likely she had—and her father struck

her harshly across the face. Hatred blazed in her heart, but a moment later, so volatile is the temper of childhood, it vanished, and the little girl gave herself over to as complete enjoyment as she had ever known.

They were on their way to Chicopee, where the first Sullivans had settled and where the dead ones were buried, and the horses were clumping along under the covered bridge across the Connecticut River, the splendid reverberation of their hoofs making a grand and wonderful funeral march.

It was a memorable day. In a little white church, completely detached from the people around her, Annie sat on a light brown bench wide-eyed and eager and watched a rainbow across her mother's coffin. The rainbow came from a cheap window of coloured glass high up in the church walls, but Annie had heard of heaven and thought she had somehow got there.

By the time they were ready to go home she was tired and cross, and the shrill voice of a woman in the carriage with her and Jimmie and her father irritated her. The house was dark and cold when they reached it, but the funeral crowd stayed to make holiday with feasting and drinking and bawdy laughter. The woman with the shrill voice gave Annie something to eat, which Annie threw angrily back at her. The smell of smoke and liquor filled the room, but after a while, mercifully, the light was blotted out, the smell faded, the voices receded, and the child sank into the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

The Thomas Sullivans were even more of a problem to their relatives now that Alice was gone. Thomas's brother, John, took Jimmie and Mary, while Annie tried to keep house for her father in a little cabin on her Uncle John's place. Subsequent events so blackened Thomas's reputation in Feeding Hills that no one had a good word for him, but it can be checked to his credit that Annie's eyes were a matter of concern to him as they had been to her mother. Once—it must

have been in a fleeting moment of prosperity—he took her to Westfield to have a doctor look at them, and bought her a white hat with a blue ribbon on it, and a pink rose. The Taylor girl had never had so beautiful a hat, nor did Annie ever again. Nor has anyone since.

The doctor in Westfield could not do much, but Annie's father told her that a single drop of water from the river Shannon would cure her eyes, it was that holy. When she asked him what made it holy, he said that it was because it began in the eyes of the Lord himself. Looking down from his high place and seeing the beautiful green land of Ireland that he had created, not minding what he was doing, tears gushed from his eyes, like springs out of the hills, and there in the great plain before Limerick the Shannon began. "Galway and Killslie have the mountains, I hear say; but Limerick has the river Shannon for her glory."

Sometimes he talked to her not of Ireland but of England. There was no way to punish England, but hatred of her was smouldering in his heart, and he told his daughter in the hearts of all the Irish, like a turf fire.

Meantime there was the house to keep. And, even with the best of intentions, a drunken man, and that is what Thomas was much of the time, and a half-blind child cannot keep house with any degree of dignity or grace.

Thomas went to live with one of his relatives, and Annie went up the road to stay with John and Anastatia Sullivan who had several children of their own and lived in a large house with French windows. It was the largest house Annie had ever been in, and Anastatia's name—a princess's name—she used to repeat to herself because she loved the sound of it. John—"'Statia's John," he was called, to distinguish him from the other John Sullivans—was a tobacco man and, in contrast with Thomas, well-to-do. He owned his farm or was in process of owning it.

This was rather a happy time for Annie. Anastatia was an

excellent housekeeper, neat almost to a fault, and Annie loved the rhythm of order. She used to play with the other children in the big red tobacco barns, and would have gone to school with them if it had not been for her eyes.

She was a strange child to them, that Annie. She could rage like a young leopard and tear the house to pieces, but she could also lie so still on the grass under the apple and cherry trees that she could catch the unwary birds that hopped about, but when John Sullivan sent her to watch the cows while they grazed on the hills from which the hamlet got its name, she would forget the cows and let them go into the neighbours' fields while she wandered dreamily off in some other direction. Once a man found her two miles from home in a reverie on the bank of a little stream.

Sometimes she was almost dangerous. Once when a friend of her father's—she did not like her father's friends—came to John Sullivan's when no one was at home but herself, she threatened to set the dog on him if he entered the gate. The dog was a bloodhound and chained. The man looked at Annie and ran. This story is still told in Feeding Hills.

When Christmas was about to come again Annie heard talk she had never heard before of presents and knew that presents were to be given and, moreover, that they were already in the front room with the French windows and that no one was supposed to go near them. So in she went.

Among other delectable objects she found a doll with blue eyes and golden hair which her starved heart petted and loved and claimed for its own. Again and again the lonely little girl slipped in to see it. By Christmas morning she had persuaded herself that the doll was hers, and when she saw it handed over to one of Anastatia's daughters she felt outraged and defrauded. She was never able to get over a feeling that the doll was hers, and in a certain sense it always was, for it came somehow to be a part of her dreams of herself and the fairies and the Little People and the Taylor girl.

Contempt for her father grew in this atmosphere. From the way she began to scorn his incompetence, his intemperance, and his illiterate brogue she knows there must have been much talk of him. The Sullivans resented him. Here they were, young and ambitious, with growing children of their own. Their limited patience came to an end, and, not being able to get satisfaction from Thomas, they appealed to the town. All the Sullivans had by that time lost all their patience.

Aunt Ellen, if Annie's recollection is accurate, took Mary. Mary was sound and healthy and lovable—cuddly. But no one wanted either Annie or Jimmie. Annie was more than half blind. She was proud, defiant, and unmanageable. No one had ever cuddled her. They were afraid of her. Jimmie, like his mother, was on a crutch, and the bunch on his hip, which was about the size of a teacup, seemed to be growing bigger; he was pale and thin. He was just five years old. There was only one place where he and his sister could be sent to be looked after, and that was the place where all the people nobody wanted were sent.

Why Washington's Birthday should have been chosen as the day of departure no one knows, but it was on February 22, 1876, that a hack drove up to the door with Jimmie in it. This was surprising, for Jimmie was seldom allowed to go anywhere, on account of his lameness. Mary was there, too, and some of the other relatives. Anastatia told Annie that she and Jimmie were going to Springfield and ride on a train, but there was something queer about it, for Anastatia was crying and wiping her eyes on her apron. She tried to kiss Annie goodbye, but Annie would not permit so strange a performance. Anastatia had never offered to kiss her before. The woman dried her tears. She was justified now. "You might at least be a good girl on the last day," she said resentfully. That was all. The hack clattered off down the road carrying two pleased and happy passengers. Even yet Annie did not know where she and Jimmie were going.

CHAPTER II

Two Castaways

In the unhappy year 1876 Grant had been President of the United States for seven years, and the tide of popular approval that had swept him into an office for which he was not fitted had nearly ebbed out. Scandals had broken in Congress, in the Navy Department, in the War Department, and in the Department of the Interior on a scale comparable only to the gigantic frauds perpetrated many years later during the Harding régime. Other idols besides Grant had fallen, and no man was above suspicion. The general taint of corruption lay over everything—business, banks, and government. Nothing escaped. Ancient beliefs were thrown into the trash heap, and the simple vulgar folk took Grant for a symbol of their woes and sullenly determined to free themselves from him.

For the purposes of this book we are concerned with this shameful chapter in American history only as it affects a small person ten years old on her way to an isolated colony in a pile of shabby buildings in a remote Massachusetts hamlet by the name of Tewksbury. This was the state infirmary; less euphoniously, this was the state poorhouse. It was a populous year for the colony, for hard times had made a number of able-bodied men and women seek shelter here. The superintendent complained that his buildings were not adequate. The average weekly number was seventy-four more than the year before. Yet, he was glad to say, there were fewer deaths except among the foundlings, a happy state due not to increased care on the part of the attendants but to the presence of the afore-mentioned able-bodied persons. Among the foundlings the record was

bad. Out of the eighty received the year before only seventy had died, whereas out of the twenty-seven received this year not one had survived.

The superintendent made it clear in his reports that he was aware that all was not well at the colony. There was pressing need in those times of economic distress for a temporary building to house the increase, and if by any chance after a year or two when prosperity returned there should be no increase, the building could be used for a chapel. At that time the only chapel he had was a hall in the insane asylum which with great inconvenience could be cleared out and used when it was necessary. All of the buildings needed painting, and the porches were insecure. Spouts and gutters needed repair. There was desperate need for suitable quarters for delirium tremens cases, "absolutely required for their own safety and for the comfort of the sick and infirm who are liable to be seriously disturbed by their outcries." Noisy and offensive patients, patients with loathsome and contagious diseases, and patients subject to maniacal attacks should be isolated. At that time it was not possible. The ventilation in the hospital was not sufficient, and there were no screens to keep out flies and mosquitoes. Water closets were needed. In many places there were only movable vessels, the disadvantages of which in an open ward the superintendent felt that he did not need to enlarge upon. He begged for a barn. He had been begging for a barn for ten years. If he had one, he explained, he could keep his cows in it, and the infirmary could have its own milk and perhaps save a few of the foundlings. He could store the harvest which he was now obliged to leave on the ground to rot. The legislature had provided extra doctors and nurses, but after the careless fashion of legislatures had failed to provide an appropriation to pay them. He hoped they would not overlook this at the next session.

It was on the day that Charlotte Cushman was buried in Boston that Annie and Jimmie passed through the city, guarded

like two little convicts, on their way to Tewksbury. By this time they were worn out with the excitement of riding on a train—the first train they had ever seen—but the journey was not over. An hour or two later they reached Tewksbury, where they were met by a Black Maria. Tired, battered, and peevish, they were huddled into the ugly conveyance and carried off to the house of derelicts, where they need no longer trouble the hearts of healthy people. They waited forlornly in the hall while a man made a record of them—the little blind girl, "virtually blind" she was at this time, and the little lame boy with a bunch on his hip.

"The girl," said the man, "must go to the women's part, and the boy to the men's." There were no private rooms in the infirmary: only wards. People supported at the expense of the commonwealth could hardly expect privacy. They were already costing the state every week $1.88 apiece, as the superintendent somewhat apologetically remarked in his report for that year. The administration was used to heartbreaking scenes, but the man who put Annie and Jimmie into the record was not entirely callous, for as soon as Annie began to cry because of what he had said and Jimmie began to cry because Annie was crying, he jumped to his feet and ran out to pat them on their heads and shoulders. The administration was not either now or later unkind. Their policy, in so far as they had one, was apparently that recommended by Grant: Let us have peace. Peace at any price.

A significant change took place in Annie during those moments. All the dormant emotion within her woke to life. She knew now what love was. She loved Jimmie. Loved him deeply, passionately, tragically, so that it seems sometimes to her to-day, after almost a lifetime of devotion to Helen Keller, that she has never loved anyone since.

The two children spent the first night in a small dark enclosure at one end of the ward. There was one bed in it, a table, and an altar. This enclosure, though they did not know it

and would not have been troubled if they had, was the "dead house" into which corpses were wheeled to wait for burial. They slept together, unhaunted by the shades of the old women who had spent their last moments above the sod lying, just as they were lying, with their faces to the ceiling. But perhaps the ghosts were not there. With the wide world to choose from it is not likely that any of them had lingered in this sad, drab, dreary little cell.

In the morning they were both assigned, after one can only guess how many conferences, to the women's ward, and Jimmie was given a girl's apron, which broke his heart, he having so recently been promoted to regular breeches, but it was the price of their staying together. They grudged it but they paid it. Besides, there was nothing else they could do.

Except for Jimmie's humiliation, the children had no great sense of change in coming to Tewksbury. The background here was not unlike the background they had always known. The ward was filled with old women, grotesque, misshapen, diseased, and dying, but most of them were Irish like the women they had known in Feeding Hills. The oldest were born in Ireland, the parents of the younger ones had come from there.

"The typical murderer of any period comes from that race which is making a place for itself in a new environment," says Warden Lawes of Sing Sing prison, citing the Irish immigrants who led all others in this reprehensible business between 1850 and 1870, and the native-born Irish who led between 1870 and 1900, to be replaced by the Italians around 1890, with the Negroes gaining upon them as the century came to an end. The warden might have widened his statement, it seems, to include the "typical public charge," for this was the time when the almshouses had more than their share of Irish and more Irish than anything. It was all very homelike for the little Sullivans.

Nothing had given them an idea that their surroundings

were shameful; indeed, they felt happier and freer than they ever had before. Jimmie's hip pained him a good deal, but it had always done that.

They had a cot apiece in the ward, and they had the dead house to play in. Much of the time they spent sitting on the floor cutting pictures out of the *Police Gazette* and coloured fashion plates out of *Godey's Lady's Book*, helping themselves to the doctors' instruments for the purpose, until a doctor caught them one day and threatened to slice off their ears if they ever did it again. Greatly to the diversion of the doctors and nurses, the children pasted these pictures, lively symbols of the world of fashion and crime, on the walls of the dead house. No one bothered to take them off.

Annie's eyes were not so good as they had been. Not infrequently she clipped off some vital part of a doll, like a head. After a while she turned all the fine cutting over to Jimmie. At one period or another, perhaps very soon after she came to the infirmary, two operations were performed upon her eyes, but she has no recollection of when they took place. Neither, so far as she could tell, made any difference in her sight.

The children were, on the whole, left to themselves. Most of the women were too near dead to care for anything. Most of them wanted to die and most of them did not have to wait long. Death was the most casual and the most common of occurrences. Nobody cared when it came. In the intervals there was no light badinage, no talking for the sake of conversation. The women had nothing to bind them together but the tie of common misery, and such misery as theirs is not voluble. When they talked it was of the Great Famine in Ireland, the details of which were recited so many times that Annie could see as vividly as if she had been present, the mothers dead in their cabins with dead children at their sides, groups of dead lying by the roadside waiting to be buried, and the hinged coffins in which they were gathered up and carried to the cemetery

and through the bottoms of which they were dropped into the grave.

Even the death of one of their number brought little comment, if any, from her neighbours. It evoked no fluttering of nurses, no calling the doctor, no fuss at all except what the patient made—the death rattle, a cry, or a groan, and often not even so much as this. The one friend still left to all of them was death. In a little while the cot would be wheeled into the dead house, the metal wheels clattering ominously over the wooden floor. The sound of the wheels was not so horrible to Annie during her first days at the almshouse, for she gave it no special meaning, but it made an indelible impression, and to-day, after she has been away from it more than fifty years, she can still sometimes at night hear its hollow and remorseless echo.

A number of the ancient crones with their minds wandering used to talk unintelligibly to themselves, and Jimmie, like a pale, thoughtful little old man, trying to puzzle out their meaning, used to imitate them. When they turned on him he used to amuse himself by throwing spit balls at them.

The woman on the cot next to his was half crazy and bedridden. Part of her body was paralyzed. She used to sing in a crying, mournful voice, "Oh, mother, oh, mother, why did you leave me alone with no one to love me . . . no friend and no home? . . . God pity the drunkard's lone child. . . . God pity . . . God pity . . . oh mother . . ." Another was a tall thin woman with white hair and dignified mien who slept little. Anyone who happened to wake at night could see her pacing back and forth like a tormented ghost. Every few turns she would stop to see if the door was locked. It was not, and there was no key, but she would pretend to lock it and then resume her ghostly walk. She never spoke directly to anyone, but mumbled continually to herself. Annie listened closely but could never make anything out of it. Somebody had called her "Lost," and that was the only name she had.

Night was, on the whole, more exciting than day. Over near the dead house a kerosene lamp gave out a wan and discouraged light edged with flickering shadows. The tenants were restless and so were the big grey rats and the mice and the cockroaches. Jimmie used to tease the rats with long spills of paper made from the pages of the *Police Gazette* and used to shriek with delight when one of them leapt into the room and frightened the patients. Both he and his sister were without fear. Rats, maniacs, sexual perversions, delirium tremens, epilepsy, corpses—it was ever so entertaining.

They had few resources other than those offered by the ward, but once at least some callers came to cheer the patients, professional sunbeams eager to shed happiness. Came with tight little bunches of pansies and daisies, and were tactless enough to sing Protestant hymns to that Catholic gathering! Annie and Jimmie enjoyed it, but the other patients resented it. The gifts were accepted as graciously as they were offered, but the callers had hardly got outside the door before the flowers were dashed to the floor and the air grew thick with insults hurled at the retreating backs. Once their father came with his brother and brought candy. They were going to Chicago. Canals and railroads were building out that way. That was the last time that Annie ever saw him, the last time, so far as she knew, until nearly fifty years later, that any member of her family took an interest in her.

Jimmie never saw clear daylight again after he entered the ward, but Annie, when the weather grew warmer, sometimes ran out into the yard and rolled herself up and down the cement walks in an invalid's chair, often stopping to gossip with the old men from another ward on their way to the dining room.

When the bell rang they assembled. Tramps, petty thieves, pickpockets, professional beggars, men out of work and in those times of depression unable to find employment, drunkards, blind men, lame men, hunchbacked men, bedraggled

and slovenly, with shamed furtive eyes, cunning sharp eyes, the strange horrible procession shuffled past, reeking with filth and profanity. Knights of the Road, Poet Tramps, Free Spirits: they were not here.

Once in a great while one of the men would start a song in a quavering voice and some of the others would join in. Some of the songs were reminiscent of the Irish Famine. "Oh, potatoes they grow small over there" (Annie wondered why), "The Wearing of the Green," and "You'll Never Miss the Water Till the Well Runs Dry." "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" were favourites. This last one puzzled Annie. She did not know that the "deep" was the ocean, and anyway she did not know what the ocean was.

But she did know—she learned from these men—that a man by the name of Grant was President of the United States. She did not know that he was a famous general, did not even know that there had been a war in the United States, though it was only eleven years since its close. But if what these men said was true, it was Grant who was responsible for their presence in the almshouse. Grant was corrupt. He ought to be impeached and maybe hanged. Not one of the men ever blamed himself, always someone else, and nearly always the government. Grant was the government.

Most of the fun that Annie had came from pretending. One day when a blind woman asked her to describe herself she gave an exquisitely embroidered picture of the blonde doll at John Sullivan's. "I'm very beautiful," she said, and not without satisfaction, for by that time she had convinced herself that she was. The old woman asked her how she knew, she being blind. "Oh, everybody tells me so. The doctors, the nurses, everybody." The old woman asked about Jimmie. Jimmie's sister said he was very handsome but nothing to compare with her. But our young Cinderella had not taken her stepsisters into account. They told the old woman that the child's

hair was not golden but brown, not curly but straight. "Holy Mother of God, child, how could you deceive a poor blind woman!" Annie perversely felt aggrieved and abused. The woman might at least have pretended that she was beautiful.

It was this woman who first told her that there were schools where the blind could be educated, but a young woman, the youngest in the ward except Annie, told her that education would not make any difference. She herself had gone to school on money which her mother, an Irishwoman, had made by taking in washing. Now she was dying of tuberculosis, alone and unbefriended. "Education doesn't make any difference if God wills otherwise, Our life is the Lord's and death's."

"I don't see what the Lord has to do with it," Annie replied. "And all the same, I'm going to school when I grow up. My cousin Anastatia wouldn't let me, but I'm going."

"It won't do any good."

"I'm going just the same."

Jimmie's voice broke in.

"No, you ain't either. You are going to stay here with me forever and ever."

It seemed that the women who were most hopelessly struck down (if there could be degrees of hopelessness where everything was hopeless) were the ones who complained least. There was Maggie Carroll, for example, who stood out from all the other women as a centre of radiance. It is not possible to tell just how much Annie could see at this time. She was classified as blind, and she could not make out the separate letters on a printed page, but she carries in her mind still a distinct picture of the delicate features and clear grey eyes of this saintly woman. This may be because she spent so much time with Maggie. And it may be also that there were days when her vision was better than usual.

Maggie was a cripple whose poor body was so warped and twisted that she had to be strapped to a wooden frame. She had been in this condition for a number of years, and bedsores

were gnawing at her flesh. She could not move herself without the help of one of the attendants, and her hands were so knotted and drawn together that she could not hold a book in them. But because no one could come near her without loving her she received more attention than the other women in the ward, and because she could read someone had provided her with a rack on which her books could rest. She could not lift them to the rack herself, but when someone else did it for her she could turn the pages. Her books were nearly all lives of the saints, and she used to read aloud from them to Annie and Jimmie and talk with them about God. Annie was fascinated by the saints, but thought then, and thinks now, that none of them surpassed Maggie herself.

The Catholic priest who came from time to time kept his robe and candles and holy unctions in a box on a table by the side of Maggie's bed. Maggie explained the meaning of these properties to Annie and tried to give the little girl something of her own gentle philosophy of life. It apparently did not occur to her that a different future might be waiting for Annie outside the walls of the infirmary, and she saw no reason why the child should rebel against spending the rest of her days where she was. She was in the almshouse, as Maggie was, because God had put her there. It was presumptuous and unholy to complain. Even as a child Annie despised this belief, but she adored Maggie, and it was to her and not to her God that she turned when Jimmie died.

Of this she herself has written:

I remember very little about Jimmie's last illness. One morning when I was helping him to dress he began to cry. The old woman in the next bed said, "He was bad in the night and kept me awake. Why didn't you get him a drink when he asked for it?" We both disliked the creature. I answered rudely, I suppose, because she said, "You are both imps of Satan." Jimmie began to make faces at her and put out his tongue. The toothless old woman made a horrid sound with her lips and said, "The devil will get you for that, sonny."

It seems to me that Jimmie tried to stand up by his bed but couldn't. He fell backward and screamed terribly. The matron, or someone else, came and took off his clothes. He pointed to the bunch on his thigh, which seemed larger than I had ever seen it. He kept saying over and over, "It hurts, it hurts." The next thing I remember is the doctor bending over him. I haven't the slightest idea how long Jimmie was sick. I think only a day or two, judging from the doctor's visits. Once he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Little girl, your brother will be going on a journey soon." I sensed his meaning more from the sound of his voice than from the words. I was perfectly familiar with the idea of death. I had seen my mother lying cold and still and strangely white, and I had seen women die in the ward where we were. I had watched the attendants roll their beds into the dead house. Afterwards strange men came in, carrying big wooden boxes and took them away. An indescribable feeling of terror swept over me. It was as if sharp cruel fingers gripped my heart. The pain made me beat out at the doctor like a little child in a rage. He seized my arms roughly and threatened to send me out of the ward. I controlled myself instantly. I knew that he would take me away from Jimmie. They had held that club over my head before, and I had always capitulated and surrendered on their terms.

I must have been sound asleep when Jimmie died, for I didn't hear them roll his bed into the dead house. When I waked, it was dark. The night-lamps in the ward were still burning. Suddenly I missed Jimmie's bed. The black, empty space where it had been filled me with wild fear. I couldn't get out of bed, my body shook so violently. I knew the dead house was behind that partition at the end of the ward, and I knew that Jimmie was dead. I can't tell how long that terrible trembling lasted; but it must have lessened; for I got up and ran to the dead house. I lifted the latch and opened the door. Nobody was awake. The sound of the latch started the trembling again. It was all dark inside. I couldn't see the bed at first. I reached out my hand and touched the iron rail, and clung to it with all my strength until I could balance myself on my feet. Then I crept to the side of the bed—and touched him! Under the sheet I felt the little cold body, and something in me broke. My screams waked everyone in the hospital. Someone rushed in and tried to pull me away; but I clutched the little body and held it with all my might. Another person came, and the two separated us. They dragged me back to the ward and tried to put me in bed; but I kicked and scratched and bit them until they dropped me upon the floor, and left me there, a

heap of pain beyond words. After a while the first paroxysm subsided, and I lay quite still. One of the women—a poor cripple—hobbled to me, and bent down as far as she could to lift me up; but the effort hurt her so that she groaned. I got up and helped her back to her bed. She made me sit beside her, and she petted me and spoke tender words of comfort to me. Then I knew the relief of passionate tears.

When it was light, I went to the dead house again; but the attendant wouldn't let me in. She told me to dress myself, and said she would let me see Jimmie. I dressed quickly; but when I reached the door, I was sent to the washroom to wash my face and hands. Then I was made to promise that I would behave myself if I was permitted to see Jimmie. I was put in a chair beside the bed, and they lifted the sheet. The light from the half-window fell upon the bed, and Jimmie's little white face, framed in dark curls, seemed to lift from the pillow. Before they could stop me, I jumped up and put my arms around him and kissed and kissed and kissed his face—the dearest thing in the world—the only thing I had ever loved. I heard a voice saying, "Come away now. You can see him again after breakfast. You must control yourself. It doesn't do any good to make such a fuss." I believe I hated that voice as I have not hated anything else in the world. I went out quietly, I sat down beside my bed and wished to die with an intensity that I have never wished for anything else.

After a while the day matron came and asked me if I wouldn't like to go with her and pick some lilacs for Jimmie. I jumped up and followed her out into the grounds. It was a lovely morning, full of the fragrance of spring and lilacs. I was given permission to pick as many as I wanted. I picked an armful of flowers, carried them to the dead house and covered Jimmie with them.

When I saw the men come in with the box, I sat perfectly still. My body was cold, and the thought came into my mind that I must be going to die. They wouldn't let me see them put Jimmie in the box; but they let me see him. The upper part of the box was open, and I could see his little white face and the lilacs against his cheek. Then they closed the box, lifted it up very gently, and carried it out. When I realized that they were taking Jimmie away and that I should never see him again, I rushed after the men. The doctor stopped me before I reached the gate. He asked if I would like to go to the burying-ground. I begged him to let me go, and he led me to the gate. I had never been out of it since the night when Jimmie and I came to

Tewksbury, and everything seemed strange. We followed the men along a narrow path—I don't think there were any trees—and soon we came to the burying-ground. It was a bare, sandy field. There was a grave already dug. I saw the mound of sand and the hole beneath it. Quickly the men lowered the coffin into the grave and began shovelling the dirt upon it. I heard the sound of the gravel falling upon the little wooden box, I could stand no more, I fell in a heap on the sand, and lay there with my face in the weeds. The doctor stood near, talking to the men quietly. When their work was finished, they went away, and the doctor said, "Come now, we must go back to the hospital." One of the men came back, and the doctor said, "Look, little girl, Tom has brought you some flowers for Jimmie's grave." I stood up, took the flowers from the man (I think they were geraniums), and stuck them in the sand and watered them with my tears. As we walked along the doctor told me that the priest had been sent for, but was sick, and couldn't come. That was why there was no service at the grave. I didn't care. I hadn't thought of the priest or of praying. When I got back, I saw that they had put Jimmie's bed back in its place. I sat down between my bed and his empty bed, and I longed desperately to die. I believe very few children have ever been so completely left alone as I was. I felt that I was the only thing that was alive in the world. The others meant nothing to me. Not a ray of light shone in the great darkness which covered me that day.

This was in May. Annie never went into the dead house again.

CHAPTER III

A Glimpse of Freedom

FOR the third time in her life Annie knew that Christmas was coming, and though the first two had brought her nothing she expected something of this one. She was alone now, but Maggie Carroll's next neighbour had been wheeled into the dead house, and Annie had the cot beside Maggie. She had only one way of expressing her devotion to Maggie. The doctors and nurses, finding her a handy baggage to have around, had given her the privilege of distributing the trays of medicine. Certain doses, probably those with opium in them, were more popular than the others, and Annie, with an ingratiating disregard of Æsculapius, used to present the tray first to Maggie Carroll to take whatever she chose. Then she gave it to the blind woman, and after that to the others indifferently. They had to take what was left.

Annie went to sleep that Christmas Eve confident that in the morning she would wake and find a present under her pillow, and when morning came she waked early and reached for it. There was nothing. Frantically she shook the pillow and tore at the bedclothes. Still there was nothing. Her violent search waked Maggie, and Maggie asked in her sweet mournful voice what the trouble was. "My present," choked the little girl. "Where is it? Where *is* it?" Maggie could not turn in the bed, though she tried, and Maggie could not put her crippled arms around her, though she tried. "Yes, you have a present, dear," she said caressingly. "God sent you one. Jesus is God's Christmas present to the poor." Annie did not think much of God's present.

The Lord's Catholic ambassador to the almshouse at this time was a young French Canadian, disrespectfully called "Frenchie" by the inmates, who used to come at irregular intervals to confess the living and shrive the dying. He always came to Maggie to get his robe and candles, and Annie, though she did not like the man, always watched with interest when he put on his purple stole and lighted the candles and said Mass. It seemed somehow a part of the beautiful picture of her mother's funeral. Maggie explained to her what the priest was doing and told her about confession, adding that she must tell him everything bad she did. Annie replied, rather pertly, that she did not do anything bad, but for some time she managed to think up enough to engage his attention every time he came for a visit.

In addition to her beads—where she got the beads she does not know—she was given an Agnus Dei to wear on a cord around her neck. She was told that the tiny silken covers held the body of Jesus. This seemed so unreasonable that one quiet day she broke them open; inside was a little waxen figure of a lamb bearing a cross. She told the horrified priest what she had done. "You have wounded the body of the Lord," he cried, and tried, quite in vain, to persuade her that she had actually hurt the flesh of Jesus. This angered her, and she declared that she was through with confession.

More horrified than ever, the priest went to Maggie. Annie followed him and showed the devout old woman the broken image. Maggie put out her maimed hands to hide it. Tenderly she wrapped it in a piece of cloth without looking at it and laid it away. Annie never saw it again and never confessed to the French-Canadian priest again. She hid when she knew he was coming. Throughout the affair her mind was in a state of division. Half of it felt sensitively that she had done wrong. That was the Maggie half. Half of it knew that she had done right. That was the Frenchie half. Ever since, her feeling towards the Church has been much the same: half of her mind

absorbed with a deep-seated rebellion against it, the other half equally absorbed with a deep-seated devotion towards it.

Frenchie left not long after this, and a Jesuit priest known as Father Barbara took his place. From the moment she saw him Annie worshipped him—his rich voice, his soft hand, his kind protecting manner. He must have been a man of great wisdom, for he did not immediately bring up the subject of confession, though he surely must have known of the difficulty, but allowed her to follow him around while he talked to her of this and that and one day of leaving the almshouse. "This is no place for you, little woman," he said, fondling her hair in the way she loved. "I am going to take you away."

Dickens says, speaking of his six months in the blacking warehouse which he considered the most degrading and difficult of his childhood experiences, that—

> No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship. . . . The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and helpless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and emulation up by was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more cannot be written. . . . My rescue from this kind of existence I considered quite hopeless, and abandoned as such altogether; though I am solemnly convinced that I never, for one hour, was reconciled to it, or was otherwise than miserably unhappy.

This was not the case with Annie Sullivan. Plunged into a far deeper degradation, for a much longer period (the almshouse was not yet through with her) she had at this time, when she was about the same age that Dickens was when he went into the blacking warehouse, no sense of shame. Dickens had known happier days. Annie had not, and when Father Barbara said that he was going to take her away she began to cry and said she did not want to go. But Father Barbara talked to her so agreeably of the Sisters to whom he was going to take her

that presently it seemed to her, too, a good plan. She left Tewksbury in February, 1877, almost a year to a day after she came, and went to the hospital of the Sœurs de la Charité in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Bright colours danced in a perpetual and bewildering procession before her eyes now. The two operations in Tewksbury apparently had done nothing for her, and the colours had grown stronger and livelier, but every doctor who looked at the eyes seemed hopeful. Very soon after her arrival in Lowell a Dr. Savory set to work on them. His operation relieved whatever was causing the colours, but left the sight so blurred that she could still be classified in public records only as blind. More benefit might have followed if her convalescence had not been interrupted by one of the most painful incidents of her childhood. Her eyes were still bandaged when a woman who had been mortally burned was brought in screaming and placed in the cot next to hers. A curtain was put up, but a mere curtain could not shut out the screams and moans or the smell of burnt flesh. Annie became hysterical and had to be taken away to another room, with the bandage sadly disarranged. Nothing that ever happened at Tewksbury was so dreadful. No other topic was discussed for days. Flesh had sloughed off, the charred bones had dropped away, bare white bones lay exposed, and the woman's clothes were seared into her body. Not a detail was neglected, and the Greek chorus of women who lay on the other cots kept harking back to it and recalling every other accident they knew in which a person had burned to death. All of which would have been memorable enough and horrible enough even if the bandage had not been disturbed.

The hospital Sisters with their fresh white bonnets were a delight to the little girl. From where she lay on the bed she could see a group of them outlined against the window, their heads swaying over their sewing like pretty columbines. Later she was allowed to help them fold the bonnets, which were ironed out flat and had to be handled with great care. Ever

so slight a mistake in folding a bonnet, even if it were not soiled, meant that it had to go back to the laundry. Simply touching them was a delight. Nor was this all.

In the ward there was a sacred heart picture of the Virgin with candles below it before which Father Barbara said Mass. The chanting of the Latin words, like music, mystical and holy, incomprehensible and suggestive of vague longings and great heights, made her feel very close to the Lord. She used to slip into St. Patrick's Church, next door, when it was empty, and climb reverently over the altar to peer at the chalice and the carvings. Sometimes Father Barbara would join her, and the two would sit in one of the pews pretending that they were listening to a sermon. Then he would take her around the stations of the cross, chanting the story that belonged to each one as they went. After that they would leave the church and walk hand in hand along the Merrimac River. At night he would read to her of St. Bridget and St. Lucia and St. Catherine and of the terrible persecutions that the Catholics had suffered at the hands of the Protestants.

When she was better she went with the Sisters on their errands of mercy, carrying baskets to the poor. One house which they pointed out she remembered ever afterwards. It belonged to a man who was generally believed, as he no doubt believed himself, to be a friend of the poor. He was a brilliant Irishman (North of Ireland Presbyterian Irish), already notorious on three continents because of his conduct during the military occupation of New Orleans, an unscrupulous but rather magnificent lawyer, a charlatan and a demagogue: Ben Butler —Silver Spoon Butler. Annie's friends treasured him as their friend. They did not have friends enough to be critical, and, besides, they liked him.

He was one of the first advocates in this country of a ten-hour working day for factory employees as against the fourteen- and fifteen-hour day which was then the custom. He had opposed and still opposed an amendment to the state constitution

which provided that no person in Massachusetts should have the right to vote, or be eligible to office, who could not read the Constitution in the English language and write his name. This Butler considered a blow to the Catholic Church and the Irishmen. Most of the barons of England who won Magna Carta, so Butler reminded whoever would listen, could not read or write, and—

> . . . an examination of the pay-rolls of that revolution which established the liberty of this country will show that much the larger number of the soldiers were such as could not have voted under the strict application of this rule of the Constitution of Massachusetts. . . . Such a provision is an invasion of liberty and the rights of men, and to-day is depriving substantially all the labouring men of the South of that true citizenship which the soldiers of Massachusetts, many of whom could not read and write, fought to give them,—namely, equality of rights that belonged to the man because he was a man.

Annie's friends, the majority of whom could not read or write, considered themselves quite capable of voting, and much more competent to manage the country than the men who had it in charge. At any rate, for these reasons, and others that will appear later, the sorry figure of Ben Butler, tricked out in the splendour of a child's imagination, became her first hero, a shining knight in armour.

This was a lovely time for Annie, but it did not last long. When she had recovered as much as it seemed she would ever recover, Father Barbara took her to Boston and left her there with some friends of his by the name of Brown who lived on Springfield Street. She remembers only that the house was dark, that it was her duty to wash and wipe the dishes, and that once when she was banging joyously and erratically upon the piano—the first piano she had ever seen—someone jerked her roughly away.

She had not been with the Browns many days before she was taken to the city infirmary, where once more her eyes underwent in rapid succession two more operations, one at

the hands of a Dr. Wadsworth, and one at the hands of a Dr. Williams. She entered the hospital on July 16, 1877, and liked it very much.

The most dramatic event of the day here, as in all charity hospitals, was the arrival of the doctor. First of all, an important-looking man in a surgeon's coat would come through the door followed by internes and flanked by nurses. He stood at the head of the patient's bed and read aloud from a chart indicating the nature of the illness. Then he examined the patient's tongue or pulse, prescribed, and passed on. The inmates were perfectly quiet or whispering until all the examinations and prescriptions were over, but the last interne had hardly turned from flirting with the last nurse before the chorus broke forth: "He said this about me." "Did you hear what he said about me?" The story of a doctor who cut into a living man thinking him dead and went mad afterwards, the story of a doctor who cut out a man's eye and stood with it in his hand trying to decide whether to stop there or cut deeper. Thousands of preposterous horrors were recited by the gaunt chorus which watched ignorantly but keenly the drama that passed before it.

The head nurse, Miss Rosa, who for many was a greatly beloved presence in the ward, let Annie make lemonades for herself, chipping ice off the block in the refrigerator and sweetening it herself, a slight privilege, but one she had never enjoyed before. Her eyes were no better, so far as she could tell, than they had been when she came, but she was content. After a while, however, the doctors said they were through with her. It was time for her to go. Father Barbara had already gone, called off to another part of the country, the Browns did not want her, and there was nowhere to send her but back to Tewksbury. She knew now what Tewksbury meant. She screamed and fastened herself to one of the doctors. Inexorably they peeled her off. The commonwealth of Massachusetts had claimed her. The commonwealth of Massachusetts threw

her once more into its great sewer of charred souls and misshapen bodies.

In the meanwhile, at least so the story runs, two visitors had come to Tewksbury from Feeding Hills—John Sullivan and his wife, Bridget. It was a long trip for them, that which to-day can be covered in a few hours, and all their trouble was for nothing. The authorities—and they were afraid of all "authorities"—told them that Jimmie had died and that Annie had gone away. They did not tell them where she had gone, and that was the last that John and Bridget ever knew of her. In 1896 a young woman with blue eyes and dark hair came to Feeding Hills with an old man with flowing beard and flowing garments—from Washington, apparently looking up war records for a pension. Old Bridget Sullivan watched sharply while they questioned her, but she did not quite have evidence enough.

"If Annie Sullivan's alive," she said after the girl had gone, "that was Annie Sullivan," and spent the rest of her life regretting that she had not asked her outright who she was.

CHAPTER IV

Misery and Romance

ANNIE was not put back in the hospital—hospitals, so it was believed, had done all they could for her—but in a ward in a building across the courtyard with a miscellaneous group of women, most of whom were younger than the ones she had known when she and Jimmie were together. Some of her new companions were insane, some tubercular, some perverted—the woman on the cot next to hers was a pervert—some were cancerous, some epileptic, some crippled. The ward across the hall was filled—always filled and nearly always overflowing—with young women who were there to have children they did not want. After the children were born, the mothers were transferred to the ward below Annie's.

These three wards were under the care of a sad, quiet little woman with a crooked back, Maggie Hogan, who moved about among them like a grey angel, soothing them when they wept, calming them with soft sweet words when they cowered before the pain of bringing new life into the world. The girls called her "Little Mother," and she was godmother to all their children. Those that seemed likely to die before the priest came she baptized herself, going through all the details of the familiar ceremony, even lighting the candles.

God knows they died fast enough. Healthy and diseased alike were packed together in the foundling house in a separate building not far away, ten and fifteen in a single room, though the advisory board of women who came on tours of inspection said that there should not have been more than two in a room. Flies and mosquitoes played over them without interference.

The heating system was inadequate, and the children were too scantily clad. There was insufficient ventilation, and the atmosphere was rendered unwholesome by the proximity of the toilet. "The kind, faithful, and intelligent personal care requisite is intrusted to pauper women, who, provided they are physically capable, are ignorant, unwilling, and selfish." The children were not much trouble. The women who looked after them during the day quieted them with drugs when they cried at night; under the circumstances the members of the advisory board did not think it surprising that most of them died within a few weeks after their arrival.

These visiting women were disturbed by laxity in other parts of the almshouse. It was suspected—this point came up later at a public investigation—that some of the children were conceived as well as born at the institution. The women urged a more complete separation of the sexes.

By this time ugly rumours were circulating throughout Massachusetts concerning conditions in the almshouse, but the superintendent found himself unable to change them. He was still sending in the same dreary report, still begging for a barn, for water closets, for separate quarters for the insane sick. He was pleased to add, however, that the average cost to the state during this year, 1878, was only $1.75 per patient. "This gratifying decrease," he said, "is the result of careful economy in management and expenditure."

Annie found her new surroundings a pleasant relief from the ward where she and Jimmie stayed. The women were younger, some of them no more than twelve years old, and there was not the same air of hopelessness about them. They were transients, here to have their children. Soon after the children were born, the mothers were transferred to the workhouse at Bridgewater, whence several ways of release offered themselves. Many found positions in private homes. Some of them, after the necessary biological interval, came back to Tewksbury to have more children.

Most of these young women were coarse and ignorant, and the language they used would not pass the most indifferent censor, even in our careless day. Maggie Hogan tried, like Maggie Carroll, to throw the scant robe of her protection around the shoulders of Annie Sullivan, but Annie was too interested to want protection.

"Very much of what I remember about Tewksbury is indecent, cruel, melancholy," she says, "gruesome in the light of grown-up experience; but nothing corresponding with my present understanding of these ideas entered my child mind. Everything interested me. I was not shocked, pained, grieved, or troubled by what happened. Such things happened. People behaved like that—that was all there was to it. It was all the life I knew. Things impressed themselves upon me because I had a receptive mind. Curiosity kept me alert and keen to know everything."

During the daytime she played with the children (some of whom were covered with syphilitic sores) and during the evening she listened to their mothers. There was more light in Annie's ward than in the others, and for this reason the girls from across the hall used to come in after supper and sit around a kerosene lamp on a post in the centre of the room, telling stories of the past. This was Annie's first contact with romance.

In the beginning her favourite was an Irish girl with blue eyes and black hair who waited on the superintendent's table dressed in a blue uniform and a white apron, an outfit which to the hungry eyes of the little girl looked, in contrast to the dingy garments she and the rest of her companions wore, like the silken robes of the Queen of Sheba. The pretty waitress had secret pockets in her apron into which she used to stuff goodies from the superintendent's table—chicken salad, cake, and biscuits, all mixed together in a grand delicious mess. While the women ate it they talked mysteriously about themselves.

The mystery, which for many months was unfathomable to

Annie, was in every case connected with a baby that was about to be born. (Annie knew that the baby was a disgrace and that mothers like these sometimes left babies in hallways and on doorsteps. She gathered that men were dreadful but women loved them. In some way they were responsible for the babies. The girls wept as they talked, and Annie sometimes wept with them without knowing why. The girls were not explicit. "Then it happened," or "I couldn't help myself. The mistress was out and we were alone in the house." "He loved me and I loved him." When Annie asked questions they laughed at her and told her to ask Tim. Tim was the man who drove the Black Maria. She never asked him, but she used to think that she might be going to have a baby, too, and used to feel her body anxiously to find out.)

Nearly all of the women had splendid stories to tell of their surroundings before they came to the almshouse—beautiful garments and jewels and handsome houses; but most of the stories, Annie suspected even then, were not true, and it was obvious that the women did not believe one another. Only one was ever able to produce proof. She had boasted so insistently of former grandeur that the other women began to snarl at her. In order to prove that she was not lying she sneaked into the baggage room where the clothes the inmates discarded when they came into the almshouse were kept, uncleaned, in paper bundles, and brought hers out. Two items Annie remembers: a pair of blue satin shoes which for one dazzling moment she tried on her own feet, and a blue velvet bolero.

In a little while Annie was able to offer contributions of her own to these evening gatherings. She began, when the women grew tired of exchanging tawdry reminiscences, by telling them the stories of the saints and the Protestant persecutions that she had learned from Maggie Carroll and Father Barbara, but it was not long before a way was provided for her to get more stories.

It was Maggie Hogan who introduced her to the small library in the administration building, and it was Maggie who selected her first books, taking only those whose authors were unmistakably Irish. And it was Maggie who persuaded a mildly crazy girl by the name of Tilly Delaney to read them to her. Later Annie selected the books herself. Her system was to choose from the titles (she could not see them) which the superintendent read out to her: *Cast Up by the Sea, Ten Nights in a Barroom, Stepping Heavenward, The Octoroon, The Lamplighter, Darkness and Daylight, Tempest and Sunshine.*

Tilly had to be bribed to read. Her one hope was to be able to escape from the institution, and she used to prowl around at night, cat-like, with eager, wild eyes, looking for an opening in the high wall. Annie promised that she would do everything to help her, and the two girls would sit down on the floor at the head of Annie's bed, between the head of the bed and the steam pipes which ran around the room. It took patience to listen to Tilly, more patience than it had taken to catch the birds at John Sullivan's place in Feeding Hills, for Tilly paid no attention to what she read, except when escape was part of the narrative. She skipped whole pages and never could remember from one time to the next where her place was, Annie, helpless in her semi-dark world, had to show her how to find it by guessing where it was from what she knew of the story. Sometimes a shudder passed over the girl's body, her lips foamed and she made strange sounds. Frightened at first, Annie learned to wait calmly until the fit was over and the reading could be resumed. Her impatient, rebellious soul she was learning to subdue when she felt that the object to be obtained was worth it.

Now and then Tilly demanded her pound of flesh, and Maggie planned a mock escape. Tilly flew into a great state of excitement and when night came two girls instead of one prowled about the grounds until Annie was able to persuade Tilly that all avenues were cut off and they would have to wait

until another time. Once or twice Maggie had Tim leave the big gate open and let Tilly through it. Always he caught her before she had gone very far and afterwards for a long time Tilly was content. It was excitement rather than escape that she wanted. And Annie, too, was getting what she wanted. In the evenings now she retold to the girls the stories that Tilly had read to her during the day. They listened eagerly. Little Annie Sullivan knew how to tell a story.

Later there was another woman who read to her—Delia. Delia had lived in England, where her father was a coal miner. The twelve members of the family slept in two rooms. In Delia's bed there were five—three at the head and two at the foot. Her older sister Estelle was the only one who slept in a nightgown. She had a toothbrush, too, which a man had given her. The children were accustomed to seeing their mother and father in the most intimate embrace and thought nothing of it. They were surrounded by brutal conditions and did not know that other conditions existed. The older sister quarrelled with her father and ran away, to America, they heard. Her mother worked harder than ever, washing. Delia used to wake at night and see her bending over the tubs. Delia became a thief, and after her mother died she, too, ran away. Sometimes she worked, sometimes she stole, sometimes she lived with men. One of the men brought her to the United States. He died soon after, and that was how she came to be at Tewksbury.

Bertha Maître. Bertha was born in the City of Quebec. Her mother had burned to death from an overturned kerosene lamp; she never saw her father and did not know anything about him. For years she lived happily in an orphans' home, where it was understood that she was one day to be dedicated to the service of God. She had beautiful golden hair, of which she was very proud, and the Sisters used to adore it, for they quarrelled among themselves as to which one should brush it. She did not realize that her dedication to the Lord included the sacrifice of her hair until the bishop in his gorgeous robes

advanced towards her with the shears in his hand. When she saw the great golden locks falling to the floor she screamed and seized the bishop's hand. "I lied to you," she cried. "I lied to God. I don't want to live here. Let me go!" A dead silence fell. The convent mother led her out of the chapel. White-faced nuns helped her disrobe. There was no sound except Bertha's sobs. During the rest of the time she stayed in the convent no one spoke to her, and the nuns used to cross themselves and mutter prayers when they passed her in the corridors.

A position was found for her in an English family where she was known as the French governess. While the children learned French, she learned English. One evening she made the acquaintance of a gifted young musician who had come to the house several times when the lady gave receptions. This evening he left the other musicians and came into the hall where she stood and asked for a drink of water. He knew by her uniform that she held a position in the household. Before he left he gave a note to the head butler to give to her, asking her to meet him at a certain place. Many meetings followed that first one. Bertha's lady went to Europe and asked Bertha to go with her, but the girl had other plans. Her sweetheart was going to Boston, and he wanted her to follow him. "I would have jumped into the fire," she said, "if he had asked me." She found it not so easy to get work in Boston.

Day after day she sat in employment offices; evening after evening she came home and waited for her lover. One evening she told him that they must get married, and after that she never saw him again. When her condition became apparent, her landlady told her she had better look for another room. "I burst into tears and told her that I had no friends and nowhere to go. She went out without speaking. The next morning a man came and asked me questions. I refused to tell him my lover's name and told him he could do what he liked with me. He brought me here."

Sally Stacy was older than most of the other women in the ward and very quiet. The matron found out that she was a nice seamstress and gave her plenty of work to do, mending garments for the inmates. She sat at the head of her bed all day long tucking, gathering, hemming, darning, and whipping. Annie used to perch on her bed and ask her questions. Sally made her get off the bed because she mussed it, but she seemed to like having her around, for as the days went by she told her what had happened to bring her there. She was born in Nova Scotia of Scottish and Irish parentage. All her people for as many generations as they could remember had been fishermen. Her father's father had saved enough to educate his oldest son for the Presbyterian ministry. He had married the daughter of a toll keeper in Fundy and was very much beloved by his people. He sent his boy, David, to medical school, but there was not money enough to keep Sally in school after she was fourteen. It was when she was twenty-five and David came home to pay them a long, long visit, bringing a college friend of his, that misfortune came to her. Her father and mother never knew, nor did the man, Phil. She came to Boston and got work. As her confinement approached she drew her corset strings tighter and tighter but it was no use. The secret could not be kept, and when she was thrown out she had nowhere to go but to the almshouse. When the baby was born it was horribly deformed and had tuberculosis. Sally at first refused to see it, but when Annie laid it on her arm something in her heart seemed to warm towards it. Later she said she would nurse it and would not let them carry it away. But it was too weak to take the breast. They kept it alive a while with a dropper, and when it died Sally wept bitterly. Annie asked her why, because she had never wanted the baby. She said she didn't know. When she saw it put into the box for burial she asked permission to get something out of her bundle in the storeroom. She returned with a man's silk handkerchief and a photograph which she told Annie was Phil. She took

off the coarse gown of the baby and wrapped it in the silk handkerchief and laid the picture on the cold little body.

But why tell over these beads of misery? There is no end to them. The result, so far as Annie was concerned, was an outlandish impression of what life was like and a queer fascinated antagonism for men. She was instinctively a little afraid of some of the men in the almshouse, in particular a great brute with misshapen fingers who supervised the dining room and used to fondle her and some of the more attractive women as they passed in and out. He was the object of storms of abuse which seldom reached his ears, for all of the women were afraid of him. "Beefy," they called him behind his back. Among themselves they complained bitterly of the soggy bread, the rancid butter, the tasteless stews, the rotten fish, the eternal corned beef. It seemed to Annie that the food bothered them more than the loss of their virtue. But they generally ate in silence. If anyone dared a complaint Beefy howled at them all indiscriminately: "Beggars, thieves, whores, what do you expect? Broiled chicken and lobster, I suppose, and cream cheese from the dairy of heaven. One more word and I'll throw you out!"

Sadie Sullivan, one of the boldest of the pregnant women, answered him back one day. "I dare you to throw me out, you dirty beast." Astonished and infuriated he leapt upon the bench to reach across the table for her. One of the other women pushed a bucket of hot tea in front of him. He tripped over it without upsetting it, and fell to the floor. Sadie threw her plate at him and yelled to Annie to hit him. Others screamed and threw plates and food, but Beefy got to his feet, grabbed Sadie by the hair, and gave her several heavy blows on the face. Annie jumped up on the table and turned over the bucket of tea, regretting as it trickled over him, and ever afterward, that it was not scalding hot. Beefy turned from Sadie and made a pass at Annie just as the superintendent and his son dashed into the room.

"What are you doing?" the superintendent shouted. And "Hold your tongues, you women," as they all began to talk at once. "Keep quiet and let one speak. You there." But no one had a chance to speak. They were interrupted by Sadie's screams and the cry of the woman who stood beside her. "Get the doctor quick. The child is coming." Beefy had not spoken. The superintendent ordered him to clear the dining room. No one waited. They all stampeded, glad of an excuse to escape. Sadie's baby arrived before the doctor came. A few days later they put her and the baby in a pine box and buried them together.

There was at this time apparently no thought in the mind of anyone in the world concerning the future of Annie Sullivan. The salvage value of the inmates of such institutions is not high, and even the doctors were letting her alone. She actually went three years without an operation on her eyes. She knew in her own mind that she wanted to get out of the almshouse—she had had a glimpse of the world outside, and she knew that there were schools where blind children like herself could be educated, but how an entirely friendless and isolated little girl could find a path to the schools she did not know. There seemed to be no future ahead of her but to grow up in the institution, in which case the pattern of her life would be much like that of Maggie Hogan, who had been there since she was a very small child.

Maggie had lived in Chicopee, near Annie's old home. Her father was dead, and her mother kept Maggie and her four other children alive and together by washing and doing housework. One day a relative brought Maggie a pair of red slippers which she loved even as Annie had loved the Taylor girl's parasol. She slept with them and kissed them, and on the edge of a rustic bridge over a brook which ran past their house she sat down to admire their reflected beauty. One day—her mother saw it from the ironing board—she leaned over too far and fell into the brook, striking herself cruelly on the rocks.

The next thing she remembered was being in bed, all bandage and plaster and pain. Her mother had to work harder than ever after this, and the oldest girl had to leave school to help. Soon afterwards two of the children died of scarlet fever, and it was not long before Mrs. Hogan followed them, heart-broken and worn out with anxiety and poverty. The oldest girl, the one who had left school, was taken by a farmer to help in his family, and Maggie was sent to the almshouse at Tewksbury. Like Maggie Carroll, she never complained. "You can't help being poor," she would say, "but you can keep poverty from eating the heart out of you." "The less change you have in your pocket the more good thoughts you can put in your head." She had somehow managed to get a shelf put in the window beside her bed, and she always kept plants in it—geraniums and wandering Jew and fuchsias, which bloomed prodigiously. Many times Annie saw her caress the flowers lightly with the tips of her fingers.

The women used to tease Annie about her superior airs, and some of them used to say, "She'll be walking out of here some day on the arm of the Emperor of Penzance." The Emperor was a crazy boy who kept the walks clean and fancied himself a general directing the movements of the army in defense of his empire. Annie heard all this with pretended indifference, but it was more or less the picture of herself that she carried in her own mind, though the Emperor of Penzance did not figure in it.

She was almost taken away, though not in just the manner the women anticipated, by another crazy boy, Jimmie Burns, who ran errands for the asylum. He was thought to be perfectly safe.

One day when Annie was walking with Delia he stopped before them, his hamper of bread still on his arm, and addressed Annie as his long-lost love. Delia ordered him sharply to get along with his bread, and, when he set the bread down on the walk, became frightened and ran. Annie stood her ground, how-

ever, finding it rather pleasant to hear his deep masculine voice speaking to her. He called her Jennie (it was love for a woman by that name which had put him in the infirmary) and begged her to fly away with him. By this time Annie had begun to wish that she had flown with Delia instead, but she got rid of the boy by promising to meet him on the following day. By the time Annie got back to the ward everyone knew and the women laughed and teased her unmercifully about her crazy lover. Maggie Hogan warned her to stay out of his way. "There's no telling what he might do," she said.

Annie promised to obey Maggie and kept the promise for one day. Then she said to herself, "How silly to be afraid! What could Jimmie do to me?" and forth she sallied to meet her lover. She had really thought that because he was crazy he would not even remember her, but when he saw her he ran towards her shouting, "Jennie, Jennie, Jennie, I'm here. I'm coming." Annie wished now that she had stayed in the ward. There was that in his voice which made her tremble.

He put the hamper down on the walk and was all for dashing out of the hospital then and there. Annie reminded him that hungry people were waiting for him and offered to help him take the bread to them. "You are trying to fool me again," he said, the cunning of madness creeping into his voice. He caught her around the waist and pressed her forcibly against his shoulder. "You don't get away from me this time, my sweetheart." Annie tried to make him at least move the bread off the walk so no one would trip over it. He let her go and reached for the bread, but catching sight of her intention to escape sprang towards her and snatched from under his coat a long knife he had stolen from the bakery.

"Jimmie!" she shrieked.

Someone knocked him down from behind, and the knife fell out of his hand.

"Pick it up and run," shouted the man who had knocked him down. He had pinned Jimmie's arms to his sides and was

calling for help, while Jimmie struggled with a madman's strength to free himself. Still trembling, Annie ran back to the ward with the knife in her hand. "Serves you right," mumbled one of the women, "he should have cut your heart out, that crazy boy you run after."

It was many years before Annie permitted herself to be romantic again.

CHAPTER V

Escape

MR. ISRAEL ZANGWILL had not yet called America the melting pot, but signs were not lacking even to Annie in her isolation in the colony at Tewksbury that other oppressed peoples besides the Irish were looking for an asylum in the United States. The most startling evidence came one morning when she was drawn out of doors by a commotion in the courtyard where a crowd of young men and women like none she had ever seen before, so godlike they were in their beauty and strength, were crying and lamenting in a strange tongue. Only one English word came out of the mêlée: "Devil." One of the men walked up and down repeating it vindictively. But it was not their distress that held Annie, it was their beauty. She was entranced with it. Whatever the cause of their present trouble these were people who had known happiness. They were fresh and glowing, and their children, playing heedlessly at their feet, were fat and rosy. Their hair was long and silky, and their features, which she afterwards came to know as Slavic, were strong and pleasant. They were dressed in bright colours. They were graceful and picturesque in the midst of their grief. Presently they grew calmer, and one of the women placed a candle on a cobblestone, and they all knelt and prayed, but they wept more than they prayed.

The superintendent told Annie that they were Polish immigrants who had been robbed by the agent who brought them over. These were sad years for Poland. Like the Irish, the Poles had been driven from their own country; like the Irish, through the oppression of a more powerful country. In 1865, the year

before Annie was born, the entire property of the Catholic Church in Poland was taken over by the Russian government. In the same year all persons of Polish blood in the nine western provinces of Russia were forbidden to acquire land. The Polish language was interdicted and Russian taught instead. There was every inducement for Poles, especially if they were Catholic, to go anywhere but to Poland. Thousands of them came to the United States. When these immigrants left the almshouse —and they vanished in a little while as suddenly as they came —it was to go as labourers on farms not far away. Annie remembered them fifty years later, when she went back to the country around Feeding Hills and found a number of the farms which in her childhood had been occupied by the Irish and before that by the "Yankees" now in the hands of Poles. The drama of the races was working itself out.

The community in the poorhouse was cosmopolitan, as she had known it during her first sojourn. Her first contact with the Negro came here. She remembers only one, a black giant of a man, fat and sweating, who used to shovel the clothes down a bulkhead into the basement where the laundry was done. He had white protruding teeth like tusks and used to work stripped to the waist and singing. He held a repulsive fascination for Annie, and she used to creep close to the bulkhead to watch him.

Most of the inmates were still Irish, but with a difference, for Ireland had recently got back something she had not had for many years—hope. Hope so burning and so far-flung that the meanest Irishman in the basest of poorhouses could not help having a share in it. The hope was centred in the person of one man, young Charles Stewart Parnell, who in 1875 had quietly taken a seat in Parliament from the county of Meath, making very slight impression and that unfavourable, and who four years later had become, without question, the first man in Ireland and the most interesting man in the British Empire.

The ascendancy of this man over the Irish was in his own

day an enigma; in ours it remains no less so. He was born in Ireland, it is true, but what education he had he got in England, and he spoke, not with the Irish brogue, but with a strong English accent. He was a landlord; the Irish for whom he was fighting were tenants, and a good part of the fight was to help them keep their land against the landlords. Parnell was a Protestant; most of the Irish were Catholics. The Irish are quick, warm, and impulsive; Parnell was cold and reserved, "encased in steel"—pleasant and charming—but "you always felt there was a piece of ice between you and him." He had none of old Daniel O'Connell's flaming power of oratory, and he was not in any sense a man of the people, but the mantle of O'Connell had fallen upon him, and the Irish, even the Irish in Tewksbury, were ready to die for him.

The story of what he did came to the almshouse through the friendly offices of another Irishman, editor of the Boston *Pilot*, Mr. John Boyle O'Reilly, who is to-day remembered in anthologies for two or three graceful poems of love. As a hero in Tewksbury he stood second only to Parnell. His opinions were accepted there without question, and the inmates loved him because he was approachable and romantic and—thoroughly Irish. He was born in Ireland, but as a young man he had enlisted in the British Army deliberately to instigate rebellion among the soldiers. When his purpose was discovered he was exiled to Australia, whence, with the help of a Catholic priest, he escaped on an American whaling vessel. He seldom missed an opportunity to declare his hatred of England (the first money he made here was by lecturing on political prisoners), but he never used this hatred, as so many did, to promote brawling and dissension among the Irish and their neighbours.

It was a tribute to O'Reilly that though he was Irish and Catholic and a Democrat—a Butler Democrat at that—he was at the same time accepted as a friend by old conservative Boston. More than once he appeared on the platform with Wendell Phillips, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and others equally

distinguished. "I have just met," said a stranger to a Bostonian, "the most remarkable, the most delightful man in all the world." "I know whom you mean," the Bostonian replied. "You mean John Boyle O'Reilly." This personal charm was reflected in his paper. "I esteem it a great honour," Oscar Wilde wrote to him, "that the first American paper I appeared in should be your admirable *Pilot.*" William Butler Yeats and Katharine Tynan were regular contributors, but it is doubtful that any of their contributions were read to Annie. Other sections of the paper were much more interesting to her and her friends.

Their excitement passed almost beyond the bounds of reason late in 1879 when the *Pilot* announced that Parnell was coming to the United States. The Irish Land League had asked him to make the trip, "for the purpose of obtaining assistance from our exiled fellow countrymen." Just what the nature of the assistance was to be was not altogether clear except to the Irish. "Clearness of aim," remarked a Canadian paper, "is not the Hibernian forte, and it is difficult to understand whether Mr. Parnell is asking for bread or gunpowder." Mr. Parnell was asking for both, as the Irish (even Annie Sullivan) well knew, and the Irish were ready to give him both. They would not have minded war. As O'Reilly expressed it, "God purifies slowly by peace but urgently by fire." The Irish were ready for fire.

At the time of this visit Parnell was thirty-three years old and looked like a king, as indeed he was—the uncrowned King of Ireland. He seemed in those days to be a man of destiny whom nothing could turn aside. The affair with Mrs. O'Shea, which brought the whole glittering structure to ruin and the hopes of the Irish with it, came later.

No king could have been more grandly received. When he arrived in New York he was met in the bay by a special committee of three hundred men, including distinguished senators, judges, merchants, and ministers. When he addressed eight

thousand people in Madison Square Garden Thurlow Weed accompanied him to the platform. When he spoke at the opera house in Newark the Governor of New Jersey came to hear him. When he held a meeting in Brooklyn, Henry Ward Beecher spoke in his behalf. In Boston Mayor Prince presided, and Wendell Phillips spoke. In February he was invited to address the national House of Representatives, an honour which up to this time had been given to only three other men—Bishop England of Charleston, Kossuth, and Lafayette. The Senate and the House followed the invitation by authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to employ any ship or vessel best adapted to the service to send relief to the poor of Ireland, and appropriated any sum of money which might be necessary.

Annie did not have to wait for Tilly Delaney or Delia to read her the story of Parnell's triumphant progress. Maggie Hogan read it, and while she read Annie embellished it with all the tag ends of glory she had ever known. She thought, because of a song she had heard, that he was Prince Charlie. Was he not bonnie, was he not a prince, and did he not come from over the water? As she sang the song to herself tears of delight came to her eyes with the thought that she belonged to him and he to her and both to Ireland.

For a long time now her dominant idea had been escape. Tilly Delaney did not desire it more frantically, but while Tilly wanted nothing more than to get out, Annie wanted to go to school to prepare herself to enter the attractive world through which Mr. Parnell moved. The sick old women hanging to life by the slenderest of threads had told her before they dropped off into perpetual oblivion that there were schools where blind children could be taught to read and write, and this gave her something to live for. As a matter of fact, the most famous of all such schools was only about twenty miles from Tewksbury—the Massachusetts School and Perkins Institution for the Blind.

The impossible had been accomplished at the Perkins Institution, and the story of it had gone around the world. The leading press agent was Mr. Charles Dickens, who in *American Notes* gave an account of his visit there to see for himself the miracle that Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe had achieved in placing Laura Bridgman—the first blind deaf mute for whom it was ever done—into contact with the world around her.

Dickens liked the Perkins Institution.

I went to see this place [he wrote] one very fine winter morning: [it was on Saturday, January 29, 1842] an Italian sky above, and the air so clear and bright on every side, that even my eyes, which are none of the best, could follow the minute lines and scraps of tracery in distant buildings. Like most other public institutions in America, of the same class, it stands a mile or two without the town, in a cheerful healthy spot; and is an airy, spacious, handsome edifice. It is built upon a height, commanding the harbour. When I paused for a moment at the door, and marked how fresh and free the whole scene was—what sparkling bubbles glanced upon the waves, and welled up every moment to the surface, as though the world below, like that above, were radiant with the bright day, and gushing over in its fulness of light: when I gazed from sail to sail away upon a ship at sea, a tiny speck of shining white, the only cloud upon the still, deep, distant blue—and turning saw a blind boy with his sightless face addressed that way, as though he too had some sense within him of the glorious distance: I felt a kind of sorrow that the place should be so very light and a strange wish that for his sake it were darker. It was but momentary, of course, and a mere fancy, but I felt it keenly for all that.

The children were not in uniform. He liked that.

Good order, cleanliness, and comfort, pervaded every corner of the building. The various classes, who were gathered around their teachers, answered the questions put to them with readiness and intelligence, and in a spirit of cheerful contest for precedence which pleased me very much. Those who were at play were as gleesome and noisy as other children.

The faces of the blind fascinated him—

. . . how free they are from all concealment of what is passing in their thoughts; observing which, a man with eyes may blush to contemplate the mask he wears.

But the face that fascinated him most was that of a girl

. . . blind, deaf, and dumb; destitute of smell; and nearly so of taste: . . . a fair young creature with every human faculty and hope, and power and goodness and affection, inclosed within her delicate frame, and but one outward sense—the sense of touch. There she was before me; built up, as it were, in a marble cell, impervious to any ray of light, or particle of sound; with her poor white hand peeping through a chink in the wall, beckoning to some good man for help, that an Immortal soul might be awakened.

Long before I looked upon her, the help had come. Her face was radiant with intelligence and pleasure. Her hair, braided by her own hands, was bound about a head, whose intellectual capacity and development were beautifully expressed in its graceful outline, and its broad open brow; her dress, arranged by herself, was a pattern of neatness and simplicity; the work she had knitted, lay beside her; her writing-book was on the desk she leaned upon. —From the mournful ruin of such bereavement, there had slowly risen up this gentle, tender, guileless, grateful-hearted being.

Like other inmates of that house she had a green ribbon bound round her eyelids. A doll she had dressed lay near upon the ground. I took it up, and saw that she had made a green fillet such as she wore herself, and fastened about its mimic eyes. . . .

This was Laura Bridgman.

Dr. Howe was alive at the time of this visit. He, too, is worth a glance as he stands beside his famous pupil—"the great Dr. Howe whose figure towers over little Boston," one who has never had what he deserves either from American biographers or from the American public, one whose reputation which always lagged behind his accomplishment was dwarfed by that of his wife which always ran far ahead of what she had achieved. Comparatively few who know that Julia Ward Howe wrote "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" know also that the

name of Samuel Gridley Howe is one that takes rank second to none in the annals of great teachers. Horace Mann said, "I would rather have built up the Blind Asylum, than have written *Hamlet,*" and believed that the time would come when everyone would agree.

Dr. Howe came into manhood on the tidal wave of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, which had already done its best and its worst for France and was for the moment creating more disturbance in Greece than anywhere else. Freedom was in the air; attention was on the oppressed: leaders believed and taught the rest of the world to believe that the interest of each member of society, no matter how poor, how blind, how deaf, how degraded, was the interest of all. "There floats not upon the stream of life," said Dr. Howe, and he was reflecting the best spirit of his time, "any wreck of humanity so utterly shattered and crippled that its signals of distress should not challenge attention and command assistance." This was the text around which he built his life.

He had scarcely taken his degree in medicine before he rushed off to Greece under the influence of Lord Byron. He fought in Poland, and when he came back to America it was to collect funds for Greece. In the meanwhile several groups in America had begun to study the needs of the blind. A school was already established in New York and in Philadelphia, and a handful of men in Boston had a project for one and wanted Sam Howe to be the head of it.

The school was founded on several premises which turned out —and Dr. Howe was one of the first to discover it—to be entirely wrong. One was that blindness was a visitation of God, governed by beneficent but incomprehensible laws. Eighteen years later Dr. Howe absolved God completely and placed the blame where it belonged. Another fallacy was that the blind in some mysterious way were, by virtue of their affliction, rendered superior to the seeing. When Dr. Howe contradicted this he knew that it would be denied and that his own earlier

writings would be quoted against him. Nevertheless, in his report for the year 1848 he printed it in capital letters—"THE BLIND AS A CLASS ARE INFERIOR TO OTHER PERSONS IN MENTAL POWER AND ABILITY." He further said, "The infirmity of blindness is really greater than it has been supposed to be. . . . I am penetrated with respect for the uncomplaining fortitude with which these men and women have borne their hard lot."

Dr. Howe worked against many difficulties and made surprisingly few mistakes. When the Institution was founded there were so few books in raised print that it would not have been worth while for the blind to learn to read if there had not been a prospect of more. He worked unremittingly for books and begged Congress to establish a library for the blind at the nation's expense. It was not done during his lifetime, but, like other suggestions of his, it did go into effect after his death. He wrote a special geography for the blind and printed the first atlas in which raised maps were used, and made the Howe Press the most active in the world for the printing of books for the blind. He was wrong about type, a vexed question which had to wait nearly three quarters of a century for settlement, for he favoured a raised Roman type much like the one on this page, acting on a fundamentally right principle which nevertheless has to be disregarded in detail, which is that the blind should be kept as nearly like the seeing as possible. This kind of type is much harder to read with the fingers than the Braille or point type, and its use was for many years a serious obstacle in the instruction of the blind.

Like all modern teachers of the sightless Dr. Howe realized the importance of physical education, but he did not know how to beguile the children into playing. Blind children are so likely to hurt themselves when they move about that, unless the play is made especially attractive, they will sit still and do nothing. Dr. Howe used to lock the boys outside the building to make them take exercise; they huddled against the wall,

stamping their feet to keep warm. He believed in religious freedom but was not always able to make practical application of it, for blind children have to be led to church, and there were not always guides enough to go around. He saw the disadvantages of institutional life and said that institutions were "evils which must be borne with, for the time." He was greatly concerned with the adult blind who, he saw, had no place in the schools, and urged the establishment of a central clearing house to look after their needs, a project which was finally realized in 1921 with the inauguration of the American Foundation for the Blind. He pleaded for the collection of statistics concerning blindness. He objected to the use of the word "asylum" as a name for the institution; two years after his death the word "school" was substituted.

His was not an age of specialization, and Dr. Howe's attention was never exclusively on the blind. Men at that time were interested in everything, most of all in the oppressed and unhappy. Dr. Howe first met Charles Sumner when they were both fighting with the poor Irish on Broad Street in Boston against a mob of hoodlums who were plundering their houses. The fire department had broken through an Irish funeral. Sumner was knocked down, and Dr. Howe got him out of the crowd to a place of safety. Dr. Howe fought with the abolitionists and was a friend of John Brown. He established the first school in America for idiots, and he was profoundly interested in the deaf. He served on several commissions, and it is pleasant to remember that in his capacity as chairman of the State Board of Charities of Massachusetts he was indirectly responsible for the presence of Annie Sullivan at the school where Laura Bridgman was taught. His last official act was a motion in favour of an investigation of the Tewksbury almshouse. The actual investigation was carried out by his friend and successor as chairman, Mr. F. B. Sanborn of Concord, a friend of Emerson and Thoreau and other Transcendentalists.

The inmates knew that the investigation was afoot. Times

were still bad outside the almshouse, and the newcomers brought more stories of mismanaged government. Spectacular tales about the almshouse were in circulation all over Massachusetts. Dead bodies were sold for bookbinding and shoe leather. Foundlings were begotten within the walls of the institution; the inmates' poor belongings were stolen from them and the state funds were misappropriated.

"Frank B. Sanborn is the name," the women told Annie. "If you could ever see him, you might get out."

But how? Not through the authorities. They would pat her on the head and tell her not to mind. Not through her friends. They could tell her what to do, but not one had the spirit to do it for her. The fairy godmother she had once expected from the outside she knew now would never come. Since Father Barbara, no one from that world had taken an interest in her, though many ladies and gentlemen had come to investigate conditions and make changes. She could not write. She had no messenger. She must wait until she could see Mr. Sanborn himself. Sometimes the god descended upon them in person.

The condition of her eyes made this difficult. Her friends she distinguished mainly by their voices and by their general outlines. One stranger, unless she knew his voice, was much like another. But the day came when word flew around the ward that Mr. Sanborn had come. He was with a group of other men. She followed them about from ward to ward, pausing when they paused, quickening her steps when they quickened theirs, going over speeches to make to them if she could ever gain their attention. After a while the tour was almost over and the men were standing near the big yellow gate. In a moment they would be gone. In a moment her last chance of ever leaving Tewksbury would be lost.

She hurled herself into their midst without knowing which was he, crying, "Mr. Sanborn, Mr. Sanborn, I want to go to school!"

"What is the matter with you?" someone asked.

"I can't see very well."

"How long have you been here?"

She could not tell him that. Nor can she tell how long it was after this before one of the women came to her and told her that she was going away to school. The woman took her upstairs and opened the little bundle of clothes which had been wrapped up when she came to the institution and found an old shawl, a little undershirt, and a pair of shoes, all of them long, long since too small. "Why, you can't wear these," the woman cried to Annie, as if it were Annie's fault, while Annie, in agony, wept within herself, "Oh, I can't go, I can't go."

Somehow they got two calico dresses for her, one red and one blue, with black flowers on them. She wore the red one. Maggie tied up the other one in a newspaper bundle and with it a coarse unbleached chemise, twin to the one she had on, and two pairs of black cotton stockings. She had no locket around her neck. No birthmark on her shoulder. No picture of her mother wrapped in a yellowing silk handkerchief. No keepsakes in a jewelled box. Except for the bundle, all that she had was inside that unkempt, intelligent little head.

No one kissed her good-bye, but Maggie carried the bundle as far as the Black Maria, and her friends crowded around her with advice. "Be a good girl and mind your teachers." "Don't tell anyone you came from the poorhouse." "Keep your head up, you're as good as any of them." "Write me when you learn how." "Send me some tobacco if you can get hold of it." "Don't let anyone fool you into getting married. He won't mean what he says." The last words that she heard were from Tim, the driver: "Don't ever come back to this place. Do you hear? Forget this and you will be all right."

A man, probably a state charity official, went with her to Boston, and a kind woman in pretty clothes spoke to her on the train—asked her where she was from and where she was going. Annie would have died rather than confess to the almshouse, but the man supplied the information. It hurt,

and it hurt still more when the woman patted her on the head, called her a "poor child," and gave her an apple and a piece of bread and butter. Her face burned.

"The essence of poverty," she said many years afterwards, "is shame. Shame to have been overwhelmed by ugliness, shame to be the hole in the perfect pattern of the universe. In that moment an intense realization of the ugliness of my appearance seized me. I knew that the calico dress which I had thought rather pretty when they put it on me was the cause of the woman's pity, and I was glad that she could not see the only other garment I had on—a coarse unbleached cotton chemise that came to my knees. My stockings were black and my shoes clumsy and too small for me. Hers I noticed were shiny and black and buttoned up at the sides. I kept trying to hide mine under the seat. She wore a hat with feathers on it. I had no hat and no cloak, but a cotton shawl which, to my great embarrassment, kept slipping to the floor. But the inadequacy of my outfit did not dawn upon me until the woman pitied me."

When she reached the Perkins Institution she was asked her name and birthday. She gave the first, but, not knowing the second, announced glibly that it was the fourth of July. The year was incorrectly recorded as 1863 instead of 1866. She was taken at once—it was about five o'clock in the afternoon—to a singing class in charge of a blind woman with a rasping, disagreeable voice.

"What is your name?" the voice asked.

"Annie Sullivan."

"Spell it."

"I can't spell."

The girls giggled.

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"Fourteen years old and can't spell!"

They had never heard of such a thing.

They had never heard of a girl without a toothbrush or a petticoat or a hat or a coat or a pair of gloves. Certainly they had never heard of a girl without a nightgown. That night for the first time in her life Annie slept in one. A teacher borrowed it from one of the girls. And that night and many nights thereafter she cried herself to sleep, lonelier than she had ever been in Tewksbury, sick with longing for the familiar and uncritical companionship of her friends in the almshouse.

She entered the Perkins Institution on October 7, 1880. Helen Keller was three months old.

CHAPTER VI

In the World of the Blind

ANNIE'S family—that rapidly increasing tribe of Sullivans around Springfield and Agawam and Feeding Hills—may have known that she entered the Perkins Institution. It is recorded on the books there after the number 985 and her name that "her father, a healthy but intemperate Irishman, does not contribute to Annie's support, and though her uncles are said to be prosperous farmers, she enters from the Tewksbury almshouse as a state charge." The word "prosperous" is significant. All over the country the Irish were coming up. Economically as well as politically they were rising. Where her father was at this time she did not know; where she was, the numerous aunts and uncles and cousins, if they knew, did not care. "I agree with Shaw," she says, speaking out of personal experience and large contact with the Irish, "that the Irish are not sentimental but hard. They will take care of neither the old nor the young if they are in the way." She resented her family, especially her father, upon whom for many years she placed the blame for her sorrows. The family had thrown her off; the rest of the way, wherever it led, she would travel alone.

If she had come to the Perkins Institution with an idea that life henceforward was to be easy and pleasant, it was quickly dispelled. She was difficult for the Institution and the Institution was extremely difficult for her.

To begin with, she had never heard so much idle talk. The almshouse, even in the ward where the pregnant women lived,

was generally quiet; and when the inmates passed one another in the halls or out of doors they usually went by in silence with their eyes down. Here everybody laughed and chattered; the girls called out cheerful greetings and stopped to gossip. What they said had little meaning for Annie; if her native tongue had been Hindustani she could hardly have been more cut off than she was during those first weeks at the Perkins Institution. What she had to say had as little meaning for the other girls. She tried to tell them about the telephone and the electric light, but they did not believe her. The people in the almshouse believed everything, and the wilder and gaudier the ideas, the more eagerly they snatched at them. But the girls at the Perkins Institution were conservative. She tried to tell them about the "Boston Strong Boy," John L. Sullivan, but prize fighting had not yet become a polite diversion, and they did not consider it "ladylike" to be interested. She tried to tell them about misgovernment and poverty and sorrow, but they did not want to hear it, and when they heard they did not believe. There was nothing left for her to do but draw in upon herself. She held to her beliefs, but she kept her own counsel.

The girls lost no time in letting her know that being Irish was by no means the proud thing that she, as Parnell's and O'Reilly's disciple, had thought it. The smug little children were sorry for the Irish—in Ireland; and, like their elders from whom they derived their opinions, contemptuous of the Irish in the United States. But whatever the rest of the world thought of the Irish and whatever the Irish did, Annie was branded. From a name like Sullivan there was no escape.

She no longer had access to the parts of the newspapers she liked, and knew very little about the movements in which she was most interested. At Tewksbury she had had someone to read to her, and nothing was censored. What reading aloud there was at the Institution was done in the evening by one of the teachers, who carefully omitted all that

Tewksbury used to dwell upon—rape, prize fights, violence, and murder. When the more decorous columns of the paper were disposed of—the Boston *Transcript* it was—she turned ("Shall I ever forget it?" Annie asks mournfully half a century later) to the *Life and Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay.* Long dull evenings. The only way to live through them was to think of something else.

Nothing she had ever known had prepared her for what she was going through. Always before she had been among Catholics; now she was among Protestants. She had been among outcasts; now she was among the respectable. The teachers were educated women—nunlike—and the girls were the daughters of ministers and teachers and dentists and druggists from various towns in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont. There was no common ground upon which she could meet any of them. The girls seemed dreadfully immature—she had not for years been with anyone her own age—and these sweet, virginal, inexperienced women could not compete in interest with women who had been seduced and thrown aside, with women who had starved and had babies and come back to life, or with women who were likely to leave the world of sanity to go sailing off into the fantastic world of their own disordered minds.

The head of the Institution was a young, amiable, and industrious Greek who spoke English with a broken accent, one Michael Anagnos (born in Albania as Anagnostopoulos) who had followed Dr. Howe to the United States and had married his daughter Julia. Mr. Anagnos was absorbed by two ambitions. One was to establish a library[1] as a memorial to Dr. Howe; the other was to build a kindergarten[2] for blind babies. Annie had no classes under him, and, as is generally the case in such institutions, saw comparatively little of him during

[1]A work which, carried on by his successor, Mr. Edward E. Allen, has resulted in the most complete library of blindiana in this country.

[2]The kindergarten was opened in May, 1887. It was the first kindergarten for the blind in the United States.

her years at Perkins as a pupil, and then chiefly when she was in trouble.

The teachers had a hard time finding a place for her in the classes. Mat weaving was the orthodox starting point, and so she was put with the little girls weaving mats. Indignantly she set to work. It was humiliating enough not to be able to weave a mat, but it was even more humiliating to see that these babies, small as they were and ignorant as they were, could do it. Moreover, they could read; they could spell; they could do arithmetic. She could not even weave a mat. She cursed the mat, and the teachers tried her somewhere else. But everywhere she went it was the same.

She had no faith in her teachers. Nearly everything they said contradicted what she had learned at Tewksbury. Father Barbara and the two Maggies had told her that it was the Protestants who persecuted the Catholics; here they told her that it was the Catholics who persecuted the Protestants. Did she believe it? Not a word of it, not even when they read out of books to prove it. Tewksbury had told her that Grant was a scoundrel. Here they told her that Grant was the heroic saviour of her country. They said that he had been a great general. She was not sure for a long time that they were telling the truth when they said that there had been a war. The only past history that the almshouse had been interested in was that of Ireland, and that meant Famine and Parnell.

Bewildered and rebellious, she fought her way through her classes, accepting nothing on the authority of her teachers or even of her books. "My mind was a question mark," she says, "my heart a frustration. The years at Tewksbury had opened mental windows and doors, pushed back concealing curtains, revealed dark depths in the lives of human beings which would have remained closed to a more happily circumstanced child. All my experiences had unfitted me for living a normal life. I soon became aware that I was different from the people about me. I learned quickly and thought myself

superior to the other girls. The new ideas which flooded my mind were sown in the deep dark soil of my life at Tewksbury and grew rapidly, sending out wild shoots that spread and overshadowed the puny thoughts of my more delicately nourished schoolmates.

"At the same time I was very restive under the necessity of acquiring the rudiments of an education. While my fingers were learning to weave in and out neatly bits of paper in a prescribed pattern, to feel the shapes of raised letters, and to manipulate metal types and place them in square holes so that two and two should make four for the enlightenment of nobody, my thoughts were busy with the things I considered important."

The other children found much amusement in her sufferings. Whenever she made mistakes or defied the teachers they laughed. Even the teachers laughed. "They ridiculed me," Annie says, "in a way they would never have dreamed of doing if I had been a younger child. When Big Annie failed to spell the simplest words correctly the class laughed uproariously. Stung to the quick by their merriment, I plodded on. These mortifications remain scars in my memory which time has not effaced. No pain lasts so long, I think, as a hurt to one's vanity."

It was cruel, but it was effective. It was the only discipline she had ever known except that imposed by her blindness, and it was the only one, as perhaps the teachers knew, that they could make her respect. It was then, and always, difficult (not to say practically impossible) to get her to learn anything in which she was not interested. It took the sewing teacher two years to persuade her to finish an apron which could have been made in a couple of hours. "Sewing and crocheting," she said when she was teaching these arts to Helen Keller, "are inventions of the devil, I think. I'd rather break stones on the king's highway than hem a handkerchief." The teacher, in desperation, finally shut her up in the closet

which held the skeleton by means of which the blind children learned the articulation of the human body. Annie laughed—it was her turn now—and shook its expensive bones so vigorously that the teacher hastily and with much trepidation let her out.

Annie did not like her teachers—with two exceptions—and felt that they—with the same two exceptions—did not like her. The two whom she loved and trusted were Miss Mary Moore and Miss Cora Newton. Her closer acquaintance with Miss Moore came about in a way not too creditable to the young pupil. Here is the story:

"My spelling was a source of humiliation. I was proud of my compositions and liked to use long, high-sounding words. The teachers enjoyed emphasizing the misspellings and often repeated them for the amusement of the class, thinking, I suppose, that it was salutary to puncture my vanity, as no doubt it was. Once when the laughter was unusually exasperating I exclaimed, 'Laugh, you silly things. That's all you can do to the queen's taste.' The teacher chose to wear the crown, though I had not had her in mind when I spoke. She ordered me from the classroom and told me to sit on the stairs until the end of the hour. Blind with rage, I bumped into the desk next to mine. The teacher ordered me to go back and leave the room quietly. I kept on my way, and at the door I turned and shouted, 'I will not sit on the stairs and I will not come to this class again.'

"Making good this defiance nearly caused me to be expelled. The matter was taken to Mr. Anagnos, who said that I must either return to the class or leave the school. Only the intervention of some of the teachers saved the situation. It was arranged that Miss Moore should read and criticize my compositions once a week, giving me an hour by myself. I felt I had won a great victory, and I still think so.

"Miss Moore was an excellent teacher. There was little in my mind, I think, which she did not comprehend fully. She

saw through the complexity of my experience and realized that one side of my mind was as undeveloped as a little child's, while the other was extraordinarily mature; that my intellect was eager and elementally sound but warped by an undisciplined imagination.

"I respected her mind, and I had a feeling that she did not think me the black sheep that others did. When I was deliberately rude or expressed opinions that showed the meagreness of my knowledge, she often pretended not to notice and changed the subject so adroitly that I could not be sure that she really had noticed. Sometimes I had an uneasy feeling that she was getting me under her thumb, and this made me uncomfortable, but little by little she disciplined my lawless mind.

"I was almost defenseless against her gentle philosophy, and the more I was with her, the more a realization of my own inadequacy rushed in upon me. I was aghast at my ignorance and dense vanity. When Miss Moore remarked, 'This composition is interesting, but it is ungrammatical and badly spelled,' I resolved that I would write no more until I had mastered grammar and spelling.

"She had a regular class in Shakespeare, one hour a week, and that hour was Paradise to me. As I look back, it seems as if it contained all that was stimulating and fine in my school days. I used to leave the classroom in a trance. We read *The Tempest, King Lear, Macbeth, As You Like It.* The impression these plays made upon me was profound. I literally lived them. For the first time I felt the magic of great poetry, the beauty of words, the romance of life. Through all the vicissitudes of my life, through all the twists and turnings and the cross currents of my extraordinary experiences, poetry has been the noblest and most spiritualizing influence I have known."

In reality Annie's teachers were all (or nearly all) very kind to her. They dressed her, or persuaded women in Boston to do it, and when free tickets were given for the musical programmes

of the Apollo and Cecilia Clubs, or the Philharmonic Society, or for public readings by Edward Everett Hale, Julia Ward Howe, or William Dean Howells, they gave her a dime for street-car fare so that she could attend them. Several times they kept her from being expelled. There was nowhere to expel her to but Tewksbury, and they were never willing to do that. In their controversies Mr. Anagnos sometimes sided with the teachers and sometimes with Annie. If he seemed too severe with Annie (and at first he had little patience with her), the teachers (with Tewksbury in their minds) switched from his side to hers, and Annie stayed.

The situation here was one with which she was to become increasingly and continuously familiar as the years went on. All of her life she has made more enemies than friends, but she has never been in a crisis when she did not have at least one friend sympathetic enough to understand her position and strong enough to make her secure in it. Once it was Dr. Edward Everett Hale. Once it was Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Once it was Helen Keller's mother. Once it was Mark Twain. But this comes later.

On one occasion when Mr. Anagnos was called upon to intervene, Annie had defied a star-chamber investigation of the girls which the teachers had instituted because some articles had been stolen from a locker. Annie refused to appear, feeling that the teachers had no right to treat them like thieves when there was no evidence. They sent for Mr. Anagnos, who, to the surprise both of the teachers and of Annie, took her part and disbanded the court. This made Mr. Anagnos her idol until about two weeks later, on Exhibition Day. It had always been Dr. Howe's belief that since the school was supported by the public, it should be open to the public. The only way he saw to save the blind from the unintelligent kindness of their friends was to educate the friends into intelligence. Annie, on this occasion, made a more elaborate toilette than usual, helping herself to some paint and powder to heighten

the effect. Mr. Anagnos, on his way to the hall with a group of visitors, caught sight of her. "Go to the sink," he said, "and wash it off." After that for a long time he was not her idol any more.

The girls with musical talent stood out on Exhibition Day, and Annie soon began to stand out with them because of the quick bright answers she made to the questions the teachers asked. Once in a while she became impertinent. "What was the best thing King John ever did?" the teacher asked. "I haven't decided," responded Annie, and no amount of cajoling could bring forth any other answer.

In the midst of her own difficulties she began to show her gift for teaching. She lifted a class of ten-year-olds who were struggling with ancient Greek history out of despondency by suggesting that each of them take the name of one of the characters in the history. Thus, Eunice became Pericles, Lydia, Aristides, etc. It came to the attention of Mr. Anagnos who smiled when he heard it and said, "Not Aristides, but Aristidena." After that Mr. Anagnos, Edward Everett Hale, and a number of others dropped Lydia's name and called her Aristidena.

It was Aristidena (Miss Lydia Hayes), who is to-day head of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind, who has spoken of Annie's kindness to the smaller children. Lydia was herself a timid little girl from the Far West, lonely and sad, at first, in her new surroundings. This was something that Annie could understand.

Lonely and incarcerated people everywhere tore at her heart. This was one reason why she was drawn to Laura Bridgman. Laura, when Annie entered the Institution, was a woman of fifty. She had been miraculously released from the triple affliction of blindness and deafness and dumbness which held her in thrall when Dr. Howe found her, but the release was only partial. She was never able to cope with the outside world. She was happy nowhere but in the school where she was taught,

and for this reason, at the instance of Dr. Howe, money was provided to make it possible for her to stay there except during the summer, when she went back to New Hampshire. The school was run on the cottage plan, and because of the extra burden which her presence imposed, she spent one year in one cottage and the following year in another. Part of the time Annie was in the same cottage with her.

Laura spent most of her time in her room, and Annie remembers her best in her favourite position, sitting beside her window quietly like Whistler's mother as we know her in the picture, with her sightless eyes turned towards the sun, a frail woman with fine features and delicate hands which wove their way in and out through the intricacies of beautiful needlework.

All of her life Laura had been very much alone, but Laura was intelligent and was never so much alone as to be willing to put up with stupidity. She wasted no time on the backward girls, and she had a horror of contact with the idiots whom Dr. Howe had kept for a while under the same roof with the blind; if by chance she touched one of them (and though blind and deaf she knew instantly) she shrank back as from a worm. She hated a "fool" as much as she loved a Baptist.

Like all of the other blind girls, Annie learned the manual alphabet[1] so as to be able to talk with Laura. This alphabet, which later constituted one of her chief bits of technical equipment as Helen Keller's teacher, consists of simple movements of the fingers of one hand; those who are accustomed to it can spell with amazing rapidity and ease (fast enough, for example, to keep up with an ordinary conversation or a lecture) and Laura and Annie were not conscious of any great difficulty as they sat together, Annie spelling into the older woman's hand the gossip of the girls and the news of the day while

[1]This alphabet, which is now standard throughout the world where Latin letters are used, was first employed in the teaching of the deaf in France in the early part of the 18th century. It was brought from Spain, where it is said to have been invented by a group of monks who had taken a vow of silence; by using it they were able to converse without breaking the vow.

Laura spelled into the air her quaint staccato thoughts in quaint staccato language.

I hate to go without my most constant friend Wight. She kept weeping many times till she left me the 9th of November. She gave

The manual (or finger) alphabet.

me a very beautiful and pure breastpin, just before I parted with her. I do not know how to govern myself while my best teacher visits Portsmouth until next Spring. I love her half as much as if she was my wife. I did not know that my best teacher was to leave me so shortly until the day before she left me. I shuddered so much and worried sadly.

Thus Laura as a grown woman expressed herself.

Laura was a living symbol of what the Perkins Institution stood for at its best. Dr. Howe, as we have already seen, was

always deeply concerned over the oppressed. It made no difference who was being oppressed or where—Negroes in slavery in the South, idiots penned in improper institutions, Greeks under the harsh dominance of Turkey, or the Irish stricken by famine—he was ready to fly to their assistance. And he had learned that while people are willing enough to rush to the aid of spectacular distress which is soon over, they are comparatively unmoved by slow corroding pain which can be lifted only through the exercise of infinite patience over an almost infinite period of time.

No happiness that ever came to him was great enough to keep his mind from the sorrows of the afflicted and the handicapped. After a visit (this on his honeymoon) to a blind deaf mute woman he wrote:

> And here the question will recur to you (for I doubt not it has occurred a dozen times already), can nothing be done to disinter this human soul? It is late, but perhaps not too late. The whole neighbourhood would rush to save this woman if she were buried alive by the caving in of a pit, and labour with zeal until she were dug out. Now if there were one who had as much patience as zeal, and who, having observed carefully how a little child learns language, would attempt to lead her gently through the same course, he might possibly awaken her to a consciousness of her immortal nature. The chance is small indeed; but with a smaller chance they would have dug desperately for her in the pit; and is the life of the soul of less import than that of the body?

The life of the soul. Always at the Perkins Institution the emphasis lay there.

And yet Dr. Howe did not try to comfort his pupils with the pious thought that they were especially blessed by virtue of their affliction. "To suppose there can be a full and harmonious development of character without sight," he said in 1848 after he had been director of the Perkins Institution for sixteen years, "is to suppose that God gave us that noble sense quite superfluously." Annie Sullivan has never been able to feel

otherwise. Blindness, whichever way it is taken, is a monstrous affliction. There are compensations, but no compensation is enough to make up for the long darkness.

What to do with Annie during vacations was an embarrassing problem. Her old quarters at the almshouse were not open to summer transients. The other girls and Laura and the teachers had homes to go to, and that first summer one of the girls invited Annie to go with her to her father's farm in New Hampshire. The girl's father was a Spiritualist, and used to come to breakfast every morning with stories of the women who had visited him (spiritually) during the night. This tormented his wife (for which purpose it was no doubt intended) and incidentally everyone else in the household. Annie spent an extremely harassed and unrestful vacation.

The following summer—she remembers it rightly as the summer that Garfield was shot—brought happier results. A blind man at the Institution found a place for her, doing light work in a rooming house in Boston. One of the boarders, a young man by the name of Clark, who used to talk with her and read to her from the newspapers, became interested in her eyes. Very little attention had been paid to them recently. No one was supposed to come to the Perkins Institution until all that was possible to do for the sight had been done, but at the young man's suggestion, one of the servants took her, on a certain free day, to the Carney Catholic Hospital. The young Dr. Bradford who examined her asked her to report to the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and it was here that she conceived an admiration and love for the medical profession that has never left her, for it was here that the curtain was lifted from the clouded eyes. It took Dr. Bradford a year, for the two operations were exactly twelve months apart, with treatments in between, but when they were over Annie Sullivan felt that she was a free woman ready for a new world. When the operations were over, Annie Sullivan could see!

CHAPTER VII

The Curtain Lifted

HER fight was not over. In a way it had only begun. Eyes that have been delicately brought back from darkness must be delicately guarded, or they will be gone again. There were lumps on Annie's eyes still, and ridges. The sight was not clear, but for the first time in her life she could make out words on the printed page. She could see the Charles River, the windows in buildings, the very bricks of which the buildings were made. She did not complain that she could not see them as well as other people. And the day that she discovered that she could thread a needle without using her tongue,[1] as the blind did, she practically died of joy and had to be born again.

She had always been able to see enough to have a sense of perspective and distance, and because of the raised Roman type which was then in use at the Institution, she found reading easy, so easy, in fact, that she does not remember learning it, but she does remember that, drunk and delirious with her new power, she swept into the newspapers, stealing them after the teachers and picking out the good old gory details she had loved at Tewksbury. In the more tiresome classrooms, where both teachers and pupils were blind, she sat, insolently oblivious, reading a paper or a book. When she wrote or read Braille herself she no longer did it by feeling it with her fingers; she looked at it with her eyes, which was bad for the Braille (she has never been a good Braille writer) and simply dreadful for the eyes. The lighting at the Institution, except in the rooms

[1]A neat trick which Annie never learned, though Helen Keller did. Laura Bridgman could thread a needle fine enough to carry 120 thread.

of the teachers who could see, was arranged for the blind, not for the seeing; late in the evenings Annie used to lean far out of the window in the deepening twilight holding a book in her hand, straining to make out the letters. The book for a long time, God save the mark, was *East Lynne.*

She had already begun to read with her fingers, no longer *The Octoroon* and *Stepping Heavenward,* but *Silas Marner* and *The Vicar of Wakefield, The Scarlet Letter, Quentin Durward, The Last Days of Pompeii,* and *The Old Curiosity Shop,* the last named of which was put in embossed type at the expense of Mr. Dickens himself. There were sixty-one titles in the Perkins library the year she graduated. Several were Biblical, several were histories, several were biographical sketches. Emerson's essays, Bryant's poems, Byron's poems selected by Matthew Arnold, "Evangeline," "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," and "Paradise Lost" were among the poems. Great care was taken in the beginning in the selection of books for the blind; very little got through that was not good.

Among the periodicals received and accepted at the Institution were the *Atlantic, Scribner's, St. Nicholas* and the *Youth's Companion,* the *Living Age,* the New York *Nation,* which was at that time under the orthodox management of Mr. E. L. Godkin. There was a variety of religious papers and journals from all over the country, but the *Pilot* was not one of them.

The world was much larger for Annie after she got her sight, even the physical world. Sometimes Mr. Anagnos sent her into Boston "on business." He was raising money for the kindergarten in every way he could think of, distributing literature, promoting teas and receptions, and begging. It was Annie's mission on one occasion (another girl went with her) to ask all of the editors in the city to print free of charge the announcement of a fair to be held for the benefit of the kindergarten. Annie was told to do all the talking, and she was told exactly what to say. She must ask for the editor, and if this was refused she must say, "Thank you, we'll call another day." They

DR. SAMUEL GRIDLEY HOWE (*oval*); LAURA BRIDGMAN; MICHAEL ANAGNOS

MRS. SOPHIA HOPKINS

ANNIE SULLIVAN

had no difficulty in seeing the editor (they were obviously not authors), and in most places they were greeted cordially.

"Of course we'll print it," said the editor of the *Globe*. "What else do we run the paper for but to please the ladies?" Mr. Clement of the *Transcript* said that he did not know whether his public would stand for it or not. "Our teachers," Annie responded, stepping out of her assigned part, "say there is nothing in the paper anyway." Mr. Clement laughed and called out his associate editors. "I want you to hear what this young lady has to say." At the office of the *Pilot* (her first and only visit to the home of her beloved paper) John Boyle O'Reilly, a big laughing Irishman, received them with characteristic whimsicality. He would print it, he said, but the *Pilot* was run to make money, and he really ought to be paid. How did she think that could be managed? She could not tell him, but when it developed that a kiss would be acceptable currency she paid him and departed.

Annie liked these expeditions, and fairly often ran away from the Institution under the pretext that she was going back to the hospital where her eyes were still under treatment. She went much oftener than the treatment demanded, but no one checked her. During one of the Tewksbury investigations she sought permission to go to the hearings. When this was refused she took one of the blind girls, said that she was going to the hospital, and made her way to the State House. They must have been a beggarly looking pair, for they had no difficulty in getting into the room where the session was in progress, the guards evidently thinking them witnesses. Deluded Annie had thought half Boston would be present, but they were led into a small room where about thirty people were seated. Complaints were made of the superintendent's extravagance. It was said that medicine, some of it drugs, was distributed indiscriminately among the patients, and it was all Annie could do to keep from springing to her feet and crying, "Yes, I did that." Another spoke of the big grey rats that bit the

patients. She hoped to hear news of some of her friends, but there was none. . . .

This expedition came very near plunging her back into the almshouse. Mr. Anagnos decided to expel her, but Mrs. Hopkins and her harassed teachers pleaded for her, and she was once more allowed to stay.

This Mrs. Hopkins was a woman from Cape Cod who came to the Perkins Institution in 1883. Encased in a prim New England body, she had a heart which demanded something to lavish itself upon, and she was alone. Her husband, a sea captain, had died on his first voyage after their marriage, and their daughter, who would have been about Annie's age, had died about the time that Annie left Tewksbury. While she was looking about for a place where she could make herself useful, Mrs. Hopkins observed some blind boys from the Perkins Institution playing along the seashore in Brewster and decided that this might perhaps be her field. She applied to the Institution and was engaged as matron of one of the cottages—it so happened, of the one in which Annie lived. Annie was working towards it, but she had not yet found herself. She was still distracted, still ragged. Almost at once Mrs. Hopkins took motherly charge of her (Mrs. Hopkins was good to all of the girls in her care), and when summer came, instead of setting her adrift, carried her off to Brewster, on the Cape, where she lived with her mother in a sturdy Colonial house which her father, a sea captain like her husband, had built with his own hands.

Annie was often pressed into service as a guide for the other girls. No matter where they wanted to go, she was ready to take them. "She never refused," says Aristidena, "to take anybody out when they wanted to go." It must be admitted that this was partly because Annie was so ready to go herself. Another of the girls says, "Beauty of person and brightness of intellect in children always appealed to her . . . the children who possessed these qualities were singled out for her favours."

Certainly beauty in all its forms has seldom had a more devoted worshipper; and seldom has the goddess laid out so niggardly a table as the one Annie Sullivan faced during the first twenty years of her life.

She often took Aristidena to the Congregationalist church. Before this, the child had been forced to leave her own church and go with the Methodists or the Baptists because there were not enough guides to spare one for the Congregationalists. Which church was a matter of indifference to Annie.

Her religious difficulties she had brought with her from Tewksbury. When she first came to Perkins she was registered as a Catholic child and sent to the Gate of Heaven, a little church not far from the school. She went to confession and told the priest, as she had told Frenchie, that she had nothing to confess and added that, moreover, she had had no chance to sin. To which he replied that we are all evil, conceived in sin, born in sin, growing up in sin. Not liking the sound of that, she switched with her roommate to the Methodist church, which was in charge of a shouting evangelist who made a great to-do over the blind members of the congregation. Annie liked this, liked the noisy worship, and joined heartily in the loud Amens.

The Gate of Heaven sought its wandering lamb, and, finding her in the wolf's camp, accused Perkins of proselytizing. Mr. Anagnos had to intervene, and Annie, called upon to make a decision, came out for the vigorous Methodists. This gave Mrs. Hopkins much distress, for she was a Unitarian, and had hoped that if there was a change it would be in her direction. But the girl's light-hearted allegiance did not stay with the Methodists after the evangelist went away. Later she went with one of the teachers to hear Phillips Brooks, and with Mrs. Hopkins to one or two hysterical camp meetings on Cape Cod, and after she went South she went once or twice to the Presbyterian church.

She still lived in a world of dreams, but she was able now to give the dreams—some of them, at any rate—concrete form.

She had come into contact with ornamental living through her visits to the home on Beacon Hill of a Miss Annette Rogers, the daughter of a banker in Boston, who must have been assigned by the State Board of Charities to look after her. Miss Rogers was tall and stately, with white hair and a cultivated voice. The house was filled with paintings and rugs—the first rugs that Annie had ever seen, for the floors at Perkins were uncarpeted. There was a bay window filled with flowers and birds, and a big living room filled with books where Miss Rogers' father sat in an armchair with the firelight playing over his handsome and distinguished face. Servants moved quietly about. This was not in a book. She could touch it. Some day, she even dared to think, she would have it.

She is described by Miss Cora Newton about this time as—

> . . . a wholesome, vigorously active, impulsive, self-assertive, generally happy girl, inclined to be impatient and combative towards criticism or any opinion not in agreement with her own. She evidenced much executive ability and initiative. She was almost passionately fond of pretty clothes, and the matron and teachers sympathizing with her did what they could to gratify her taste. I remember her asking one moonlight winter night permission to model in snow in the quadrangle after the reading hour. Three of us teachers remained in the schoolroom overlooking the quadrangle to guard her from possible intruders, while she modelled a graceful, full-sized figure clothed in low-neck, short-sleeved, long-train evening gown; the hair arranged in heavy coils high on the head, and a long curl over the shoulder. It was interesting to watch her skilful work in making an artistic expression of what she evidently hoped to be and have.

She experimented with her name, adding Robinson, Mansfield, and other embellishments that she has forgotten. Someone had told her that Mansfield was an aristocratic Irish name. She used it for many years, and though she has long since discarded it herself, she still gets letters addressed to Miss Anne Mansfield Sullivan.

She saw other people of cultivation. The social distinction

of the Howe family lent an aura to the Institution, and many famous visitors came to see it. Oscar Wilde was among them in 1882, but Annie does not remember him. Dr. Howe was dead, but Mrs. Howe frequently stayed here with her daughter and son-in-law, bringing with her from time to time Mrs. Livermore and other women strongly occupied with the suffrage movement. Mrs. Livermore had visited the almshouse at Tewksbury and found "a motley company of human beings . . . many of them so repulsive in appearance that one hesitated to shake hands with them."

She had some years earlier taught school in the South, and had found there a condition which Annie, too, was to encounter a few years later. "People at the South," said Mrs. Livermore, "regarded all the world as divided into two classes—those who worked for a living and those who lived by the work of others. Between these two classes there was a sharp line of demarcation, over which it was impossible for the broadest and noblest Southerner to pass. To work for a living was almost as foul a blot on one's escutcheon, at that time, as to have Negro blood in one's veins."

Mrs. Howe had the confident bearing of a woman who is honoured not only locally but nationally. She believed in her own greatness, and, as Mr. John Jay Chapman says, "Neither she nor her circle ever forgot that there were laurels on her brow."

Her associates always spoke of her with admiration and nearly always with a feeling that there was a distance between them. "For Julia Ward Howe I had an immense admiration," says Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, her companion in the suffrage campaigns, "but though from first to last I saw much of her, I never felt that I really knew her. She was a woman of the widest culture, interested in every progressive movement. With all her big heart, she tried to be a democrat, but she was an aristocrat to the very core of her, and, despite her wonderful work for others, she lived in a splendid isolation."

Mrs. Howe was a remarkably well educated woman for her day and time, or for any time. She read Greek and Latin easily and knew French, German, and Italian. She had the kind of courage which did not hesitate to face an unfriendly audience from the platform in the days when it was not thought seemly for women to make speeches. She was interested in nearly everything and sometimes used to invite her friends to her house to listen to readings of her own lectures, "How Not to Teach Ethics," "Doubt and Belief, the Two Feet of the Mind," "Moral Triangulation, or the Third Party." Sometimes the blind children went to hear her lectures.

More often than the girls liked, she sent word that on Saturday morning she would read aloud to them passages from the Iliad. Mrs. Howe read beautifully, with a careful enunciation, in a voice which Miss Grace King, who heard her in New Orleans, called "richly musical and modulated to the tone of high society." But these Saturday-morning readings, the blind girls felt, were an invasion of their rights, for Saturdays, except for these,were free. They were in no frame of mind to be taken with a "reading," however distinguished the reader or the thing read. Annie (acting on Parnell's principle) once tried to arrange a boycott, but without success. The other girls were afraid. The Institution stood in great awe of Mrs. Howe and was proud of its connection with her..

The "Howe attitude" towards the school was possessive. "My first home," says Miss Maud Howe, "was a public institution, but I had more right to it than most of those who lived there, for the Perkins Institution was founded[1] and built by my father, Samuel Gridley Howe." It might go without saying that the blind children for whom the institution was designed had a different feeling.

Mrs. Howe was nearly fifty years older than Annie Sullivan, and she had all that aristocratic birth, native intelligence, dis-

[1]The Perkins Institution was founded in 1830 through the efforts of Dr. John D. Fisher and Mr. Thomas H. Perkins. Dr. Howe became director in 1831.

tinguished achievement, and the laurels of an adoring nation could give her; the little Sullivan upstart, on the other hand, had only the background of poverty, the full heritage and the burning heart of an Irish rebel. When they came together it was with the sharp impact of two strong antagonistic personalities, each worthy of the other's steel. It was Judy O'Grady, her pert nose in the air, before the Colonel's lady, and neither of them liked it very much.

Annie was never at ease with any of the Howes. She felt that they patronized her when she spoke to them; that they were offended if she tried to be friendly with them, and equally offended if she disliked them. She was always uncomfortable with them, and painfully aggressive.

It was because of Mrs. Howe's connection with it that Annie found herself at the Institution near the centre of the joyous and still comparatively young movement for woman suffrage. Joy may not seem apropos, but it is impossible to read the memoirs and biographies of the women in the movement without catching something of their gusto, their vitality, their delight. They had difficulties, but they were for a sacred cause and they gloried in them. Either they did not see or carefully blinded themselves to the possible bitterness of the disillusioned generations which were to come after them. They had been so often told by the fashionable Byronic hero that they were purer and better than men that they honestly believed it. Purity and goodness were on the way to triumph, and it was magnificent. Scattering specious arguments, wearing short hair and bloomers, keeping their own names, lecturing on what to do with daughters and husbands, editing magazines, defining women's aims, and offering large, loose, and unprovable prophecies as to what women would do, once they were given a chance, they created a great disturbance and gathered an increasing force of allies, largely among the less reputable citizens of the several communities.

Annie was influenced to the extent of declaring after she

had heard Mrs. Livermore that she too would be a preacher and was rebuked by Mrs. Howe for her forwardness.

It is a little strange that this movement never found her a convert—their opinions were extravagant enough to appeal to her—but she was never interested, even later, when Helen Keller and her mother were swept into it. Her attitude, in so far as she ever considered the question at all, was about that of "Mother Jones": "You don't need a vote to raise hell! You need convictions and a voice!" Convictions she had.

In 1882—Annie's first successful operation was in 1881—Ben Butler, the friend of the poor, took his fifth run for the governorship of Massachusetts, this time on the Democratic ticket. He had tried twice before on the Republican ticket, once before on the Democratic ticket, and once on the Independent ticket. The Democrats, after a frenzied campaign, finally elected him. Butler has come down to us with words of praise from Grant (notoriously a bad judge of men), Charles Sumner, Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, and William Lloyd Garrison, but over the country at large he was known as Beast Butler. John Quincy Adams said during one of the Butler campaigns, "Personal politics, or the subordination of all principle to the mere aggrandizement of an individual, has seldom had a more perfect specimen than Benjamin F. Butler." The Boston *Post* declared that it was "an indescribable insult to the honoured Democratic party of Massachusetts to offer it a gubernatorial candidate like Gen. Butler." Yet Butler had his followers, like most demagogues, and they adored him.

He was brilliant—everyone admitted it—but his enemies said he was sharp. "Of course I'm sharp," he countered. "It is only when they cannot imitate it that they complain." He was never at a loss for something to say. When the judge reprimanded him for heckling a witness on the grounds that the witness was a Harvard man and should therefore be treated

with consideration, Butler replied, "I am aware of it, your honour; we hung one of them[1] the other day."

Butler was a friend of Clara Barton and an advocate of woman suffrage. The women made use of him, but did not take him too seriously, most of them feeling that he was with them only because he "wanted his dish right side up if it rained." Even the *Woman's Journal*, Lucy Stone's paper, could not give its support to the woman's champion. "I am not one of those to whom the election of General Butler is the greatest of calamities," said one of its editors, "though I sincerely regret it." He especially deplored its influence on the young.

Respectable Massachusetts nearly went wild during the Butler régime. Massachusetts had been aggressively for the Negro, but she was outraged when Butler appointed a Negro judge of the judicial district of Charlestown. She had never pretended any special friendship for the Irish, but she was almost equally outraged when he appointed an Irish Catholic to the bench in the judicial district of Boston.

It had been the custom of Harvard College to confer an honorary degree upon the governor of the state, but Harvard could not bring herself (Charles Eliot was already president, had been for thirteen or fourteen years) to place a laurel on Butler's brow. He was invited to the commencement exercises, though there had been a rumour that even this courtesy would not be extended, and drove thither in state. He already had an honorary LL.D. from Williams, which, as he truthfully remarked in his memoirs, he could read in the original Latin, which was more than most of the recipients could do. Harvard passed him over, he said, because he had told how she bought dead bodies from Tewksbury and skinned them.

Early in his campaign Annie discovered in her stolen newspapers that one of his most highly varnished planks was a

[1]He was referring to Prof. John Webster of Harvard who was hanged for the murder of Dr. Parkman, uncle of the historian, Francis Parkman. In *Murder at Smutty Nose* Mr. Edmund Pearson called this "America's classic murder."

promise to reform the almshouse at Tewksbury. She did not question his motive, not then; nor did she stop to think that what he said about corpses being sold for shoe leather, even if true, was much less important than what he might have said about the way they were treated before they became corpses. She only knew that the Sisters had called him their friend and that what he said about conditions inside the almshouse was true. The teachers and pupils at Perkins felt that she was merely being perverse in nailing Butler's flag so securely to her mast, but no number of newspapers or teachers or girls could make her take it down. She still read the *Pilot* when she could get it, but the teachers talked as if the devil wrote the articles in it. "Well," she said to herself at night, alone in the darkness, "I like what the devil says. If God thinks the way they do they can have him. Let them call me a silly fool if they want to, I'll stand up for Ben Butler till I die."

"And so," she says to-day, "I have after a fashion, though I long ago ceased to admire the man. But his way of attacking the evils upon which the mighty sit so complacently still stirs my spirit to futile rebellion."

The attitude of her classmates is shown in the following statement, written in 1927 by one who has evidently neither forgotten nor forgiven this period:

> As Miss Sullivan was a homeless girl, it was no discredit to her that she came to our school from a charitable institution unkempt and badly clothed. Nor is it strange that, from such surroundings, she came with strong prejudices and a narrow point of view. . . . Politically Annie was always a radical Democrat with which point of view I had no sympathy.

Annie was picking up an assortment of violent opinions. New ones.

The feeling at the Perkins Institution had always been strong against the South. The war was over, but the animosity remained. Dr. Howe had been a close friend of John Brown and had furnished him money and guns, though he professed

himself surprised at the Harper's Ferry episode, and fled the country afterwards, offering the rather lame excuse that he thought it would be better for Brown if he was out of the way. Charles Sumner was one of his most intimate friends, and he knew Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison. He had helped fugitive slaves escape. He had been in the South and had brought back stories of young men there "who swore that they only wanted to get sight of an abolitionist, that they might tar and roast him in his own fat." Everywhere people were still singing Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," though the "hero born of woman" had already more or less crushed the serpent with his heel. Cold indeed were those benighted spirits who could sing it without a chittering of heroic thrills along the spine. Annie became vigorously pro-Negro and anti-Southern, and used to delight in challenging the "haughty Southrons" in the ringing words of Whittier or Lowell. These Southrons, she heard it on all sides, were not like themselves. They were barbarians and scarcely human. Mrs. Hopkins, who held few convictions but those few strongly, firmly believed this. One of Annie's favourite poems was Whittier's "Massachusetts to Virginia," the burden of which was that if Virginia was in any doubt as to the proper way to conduct herself she might follow the superior example of Massachusetts.

International politics interested her as much as home politics. What she remembered best about Mr. Anagnos in later years was his chapel talks. Having been brought up in Albania, a shepherd boy in the hills there, when Albania was under the rule of Turkey; having been educated in Athens at the university, during the years of resentment that followed the accession of the foreign Prince Otto of Bavaria to the throne of Greece; and having been a hot-headed young newspaper man in the same city when all Greece was agitated over the proposed annexation of Crete when that small island was in revolt against Turkey, he was thoroughly familiar with European and Near Eastern politics, knew the ambitions of both

the little countries and the big ones, and to his uncomprehending audience predicted the coming Balkan Wars, the waning of Turkish power in Europe, and, because of what she had done in Greece and Turkey, the rise of Russia into a dominating world force. What the rest of the blind children thought of these little homilies we do not know, but Annie had a natural Irish aptitude for politics. She remembered them. Especially what he had to say about Russia, which she has for many years considered the most interesting and significant country in the world.

CHAPTER VIII

Waiting

THERE were eight graduates in 1886, four of them boys. Annie was valedictorian. Their personal excitement over the exercises which were to be held in Tremont Temple, with the governor of the state, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, and other notables present, was glorified by a larger excitement which held the entire country in thrall. This was the approaching romantic marriage of President Cleveland to young Miss Frances Folsom, the daughter of his former law partner. Mr. Cleveland was nearly fifty years old, Miss Folsom twenty-two. No President had ever before married in the White House, nor has one since.

There were other events of far more significance taking place, for this year, 1886, has come to be known as "the great strike year." In the midst of extreme industrial distress strikes and lockouts pervaded the country, with labouring men as determined to win the movement for an eight-hour day as employers were to crush it forever. The Haymarket riot took place in Chicago on May 4th. A bomb was thrown, shots were fired; seven policemen were killed and a number of persons wounded. This was a momentous occasion. It was the first time (*vide* Mr. Louis Adamic) that dynamite was ever used in the United States for the destruction of human life. "The Haymarket Bomb is the 'Adam' of all the 'pineapples' that go off nowadays in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and elsewhere in the cause of all sorts of 'rackets' as well as

the cause of organized labour." Eight men, the famous "Chicago anarchists" in whose behalf such men as George Bernard Shaw, William Morris, and, in this country, William Dean Howells, were to plead, were thrown into prison. Feeling was tense all over the country, the burden of it being, among labourers and employers as well, "Hang them first and try them afterwards."

But with all this going on, the front page of the newspapers, between May 29th, when Miss Folsom arrived in New York after a year in Europe and the engagement was announced, and June 2nd, which was the day of the wedding, belonged to the President and his bride. No other White House wedding except that of Alice Roosevelt in 1906 has ever attracted so much attention. Letters were written to the papers protesting against the way the privacy of the bride and groom was invaded (as in the case of the Lindberghs many years later), and the New York *Times* characteristically congratulated itself upon having somewhat more delicacy than other newspapers. Whole columns were devoted to Miss Folsom's wardrobe—the wedding gown, "a poem of simplicity," made of ivory satin heavy enough to stand alone, with a train (fortunately of lighter material) six meters long, the grey travelling dress over a petticoat of dark grey silk, with fifty or sixty narrow white stripes forming a hem half a meter deep with smaller and fewer stripes on the tunic. Mr. Anagnos was the first to notice the rather remarkable resemblance between Annie Sullivan and Miss Folsom—the shape of the head, the style of pompadour, the general shape of the face. Mrs. Hopkins, planning Annie's graduation dress, made the most of this resemblance, even to the point of copying the design from the dress in which Miss Folsom had graduated from Wells College, and Annie studied the newspaper photographs of the more fortunate girl so as to make herself look (if possible) even more like the Bride of the White House. Mrs. Hopkins decreed a white muslin dress with elbow sleeves and three ruffles edged

with Valenciennes lace, and for the occasion loaned her a pink sash which her own daughter had worn when she graduated from high school. This was quite as intoxicating as marrying a President—Annie had never had a white dress before, much less a pink sash—but there was even more. White shoes! The red shoes that had caused Maggie Hogan's sorrow were not so precious.

"I stood before the little mirror in Mrs. Hopkins' room," says Annie, speaking of the morning of her graduation, "arrayed in all my finery. The dear woman had piled my hair on the top of my head and with her curling iron had made little ringlets at my temples like Mrs. Cleveland's. I gazed at my reflection speechless with delight. I *did* look like the Bride of the White House.

"Just as we were going up the steps to the platform in Tremont Temple Miss Moore pinned a bunch of roses the colour of my sash at my belt. The touch of their cool petals made me feel faint. Mr. Anagnos took my hand and led me to my seat, speaking kind words which I did not hear. I listened to the music and the speeches as one in a dream. Then my time came. I heard the Governor speak my name, and I rose trembling in every limb. I knew I must walk to the centre of the platform, and I wondered if I should get there. I must have hesitated longer than I should, for I heard the Governor speak my name again. With what seemed to me the courage of a thousand Irish chieftains I stepped forward and faced the great audience. The Governor clapped his hands, and everyone followed his example. I felt profoundly grateful to him for that moment in which to pull myself together. After the 'Ladies and Gentlemen,' everything went smoothly."

This earnest little address is, through the voluminousness of Mr. Anagnos' reports, still preserved. Dr. Samuel Eliot, in presenting the diplomas, praised it highly and said that it was not necessary for him to enlarge upon it, and the Boston papers carried pleasant complimentary paragraphs about it

the following day. A week later, in describing the graduating exercises, the *Christian Register* spoke of it as—

. . . the only address by a graduate, the valedictory, by Miss Annie M. Sullivan, of which we have not room to say a tithe of what we would. It was in an altogether earnest, sincere, thoughtful spirit, full of wise suggestions, and spoken in tones that vibrated with true feeling and genuine refinement.

Two or three sentences from the address are significant:

And now we are going out into the busy world, to take our share in life's burdens, and do our little to make that world better, wiser, and happier.

We shall be most likely to succeed in this, *if we obey the great law of our being.*

Self-culture is a benefit, not only to the individual, but also to mankind. Every man who improves himself is aiding the progress of society, and everyone who stands still holds it back.

I was back in my little room. I must shed my white splendour before the supper bell rang. Reluctantly I unfastened the sash and smoothed it out on the bed. I wondered if I should ever wear it again. (I never did. Mrs. Hopkins put it away with other things which belonged to her beloved daughter.) The dress was my own. I knew I should wear it again. I fingered the little white buttons as if they had been real pearls. It took a lot of will power to remove the white slippers. I brushed them with my face towel and put them back in the box they had come in, wrapped up in tissue paper. Mrs. Hopkins need not have admonished me to be careful of them. They were the delight of my heart, even more than the white dress with its three ruffles.

I sat on the side of my bed a long time admiring my dainty underclothes. I had never had any pretty things. The girls were calling me, but I pretended not to hear. This hour was mine, and nothing should interfere with my enjoyment. I slowly removed one snowy garment after another, fingering the tucks and the lace on the edges. If only I could wear things like them always. The thought of Mrs. Hopkins' kindness brought tears to my eyes. How good she was! And how much the lovely things must have cost! The thought of money brought me back to reality.

One must have money to buy pretty things. What could I do to get money? Here I was twenty years old, and I realized that I did not know a single subject thoroughly. I could not possibly teach, and I had no urge to teach. I knew better than I had six years ago how abysmal my ignorance was. I did not know if there was any sort of work I could do to earn my living. For weeks that problem had been in my mind and in the minds of my friends.

The supper bell rang. Hurriedly I put on my school dress. The thought that I might have to return to Tewksbury after all stabbed my heart. From the peak of happiness I had climbed I suddenly tumbled into despair. I put my bouquet into a glass of water, and braced myself for the ordeal of facing the other girls, resolved that nobody should guess just for one evening that I wasn't the happiest girl in the world.

She had written to Mr. Sanborn, through whose efforts she had escaped from Tewksbury, to invite him to be present at her graduation, thinking it might gratify him to know that the girl he had befriended had to some extent justified his trouble. He was in Wisconsin or Nebraska at the time and did not reply until after the exercises were over. He declares that he *did* reply, but she never received the letter. This may have been because he had no address but that of the Institution and she was at Cape Cod. At any rate, he made no more inquiries about her, though he was a member of the corporation of the Perkins Institution and an "intimate friend" of Mr. Anagnos and might easily have done so. He was a Transcendentalist and no doubt had many problems on his mind more important than the future of a pauper girl. The first time he saw her after her graduation was a few years later when she and Helen were the guests of the Institution. At this meeting, he said in a letter to Helen many years later, "I had no more knowledge or thought that your teacher was the child I had met at Tewksbury than that she was the present Queen of England, whom I had seen at Athens." The fall of Parnell did not make so deep a wound as this.

Still bothered about what she was to do, Annie went, when

commencement was over, to Cape Cod with Mrs. Hopkins. A teacher of music in the boys' department had said that he might be able to persuade a lady of his acquaintance to hire her as an attendant for her two children. He wasn't sure. Miss Moore wanted her to go to a normal school and prepare to be a teacher, and Mr. Anagnos had said he would try to raise funds for it. Someone thought she might be able to get a place in Boston washing dishes. The only suggestion that appealed to her was selling books from house to house. To carry wisdom from door to door and city to city until no dark corner of ignorance was left in Massachusetts, to meet agreeable and intelligent people, to see new places—this indeed was a calling worthy of the highest talents; but the delectable vision of herself as a torchbearer was much blurred by the time she had talked with a blind girl who had actually had experience in selling books from house to house and was so firmly convinced that she convinced Annie, too, that it was the hardest job in the world. At the Institution Annie had learned to crochet fascinators, lambrequins, daisy table mats, moss mats, and other atrocities, and had earned the first money she had ever had of her own. A shawl had once brought her five dollars, but no one could make a living this way. Nothing was settled when she left for Brewster.

This was her third summer at the Cape, and she had fallen in love with the place. The house of Mrs. Hopkins' mother, "Aunt Crocker"—a sea captain's house—was a museum of interest, especially the parlour, which could be got at only on special occasions lest the bright flowers in the Brussels carpet fade in the sunlight. A very large and impressive crayon portrait of Mr. Crocker hung over the mantelpiece, while on the wall opposite hung a black oval frame containing a wreath of waxed flowers which had rested on his coffin. In the centre of the wreath was an exact reproduction, in ink, of the inscription which was engraved on the coffin plate. On another wall were portraits of two children, a boy and a girl, who had died within a week of each other from scarlet fever. They were in

scarlet frocks, and the itinerant painter who had copied them from tintypes evidently had not known which was the boy and which the girl. At any rate, no one could tell now.

The funereal aspect of the room was relieved by the brilliant carpet, the whatnot filled with ivory elephants, Chinese figures, music boxes, and other knick-knacks and curios from all over the world, by two delightful china dolls on the mantelpiece carrying baskets of fruits and flowers, by a set of blue china from Holland, used only on occasions of ceremony, silver goblets from Portugal, a magnificent lamp with long glass prisms which, much to Aunt Crocker's distress, could be made to tinkle when Annie's saucy fingers brushed against them. The mahogany furniture discouraged loitering. It was upholstered in shining black haircloth, which made sitting slippery and uncertain. When Annie stole in and opened a few slats of the window blinds it was to fondle the glass dolls on the mantelpiece and to wish passionately, as she had wished so many times at John Sullivan's, that she, too, might have perfect doll-like blue eyes and golden hair.

During the day she used to go with Mrs. Hopkins' brother Frank on his grocery wagon. Frank had fallen in love with a girl of unexpected determination who said that she would never marry a sailor. For her sake he had given up the sea and had bought a grocery store. While his wife kept the store he made deliveries and solicited trade. Annie sat with him on the high seat of the rumbling wagon, eating cookies and listening to his stories of the quaint people at whose doors they called. She respected these proud, self-supporting, self-sufficient New Englanders as she has respected few people, nor has anything ever happened to tarnish the feeling.

She was in the midst of romance, but there was little evidence of it. Many of Brewster's men were seafarers who might have talked of shining argosies and golden fleece and magic seas; instead they talked of the price of fish and cranberries. Only one ever told her tales of the sea.

From Aunt Crocker's house there were two roads to the sea. One was a sandy grass-grown lane, and one was a short cut through a field. At the far end of the field was a rail fence; just beyond, a clump of yellow pines around which deadly *amanitas* grew in tremendous profusion, looking like well browned biscuits, fresh from the oven. Beyond this, through tall, stinging sea grasses and a wide stretch of yellow sand, stood the bathing house with the whole ocean beyond.

The ocean was new to Annie. She was born inland, and although the Perkins Institution at that time was close to the shore, the sea front at South Boston was a rough place of cheap boarding houses and saloons, and the children were never taken there. She did not succumb to its charm, nor has she ever done so, but she used to love to swim in it and to lie afterwards for hours dug into the sea-washed sand, watching the gulls, and reciting to herself the poetry she had learned at the Institution. She had not gone many times to the shore before she made the acquaintance of the Hermit of Brewster.

Mrs. Hopkins had warned her against a certain path which, she said, led to a filthy cave where a crazy man had lived for years alone. A fisherman used to bring him his simple groceries to a certain bend in the road, receive his money, and depart. He had a dilapidated dory, and that was about all that Brewster knew. He had lived there so long that his townspeople had almost forgotten him.

Annie was bedevilled with curiosity. As soon as the dishes were washed and the house tidied, she used to rush out to watch along the path he was supposed to follow, but she never saw him. One day, her patience exhausted, she started up the path herself, trying to look like a tourist who has come for the sole purpose of enjoying the scenery. She moved noisily so as to attract attention while she was yet far enough away to escape easily, if escape should be necessary. She heard nothing, and presently came to a small plateau of yellow sand, with a structure on it much like a hen coop. Pots and pans were in view,

and a shirt and a pair of trousers hung on a line. The dory lay in an inlet. The old man was at home, but where? No sound broke the stillness of the bright summer afternoon.

She walked boldly around to the front of the coop, and there on a bench asleep with his head on his breast sat an old man with a beard like Rip Van Winkle's. He wore a pair of ragged blue overalls, and his brown feet were bare.

When he lifted his head Annie remarked sociably that she thought he might be lonely and had come to visit him.

"Ain't you afraid?" he asked.

She admitted that she had been at first but not any more. He let her know that he did not want any friends, not of the human sort, at least, and said that he had plenty of friends, anyway. They all had feathers. Annie begged to see them. He replied that they were not used to "wimmin" and would be afraid, but when Annie protested that she would be very quiet and added that she was awfully tired, the old man asked her to sit down and walked to the edge of the plateau and uttered a strange cooing sound, amazingly loud but not harsh.

Almost instantly gulls began to come. How many there actually were Annie does not know, but in memory it seems that there were thousands. They lighted on the old man's shoulders and swarmed about his feet. He beat them off, admonishing them not to be greedy, and made his way with some difficulty to the hut, apologizing for their rudeness.

"They know I'm going to feed them," he explained, and brought out from the hut a pail of "candy" which he said was made of scraps: meal, fish, and sea moss which he ground together between two big stones. As the food disappeared, the birds drifted away against a golden background, a Japanese screen, infinitely large, come to life.

After that Annie and the old man became friends. He called her Daughter, and she called him Captain Dad. They sat in pleasant nooks—he knew all of them for miles along the coast—or went out in the dory. While he chewed tobacco and fished

he talked about his years at sea. He had gone "afore he got out of diapers" and this was the only bit of personal history he ever mentioned beyond saying that he was a Cape man. He talked more about ships than about men. "A ship has a life of her own like folks," he was fond of saying, "only there ain't so much talking." It was not until her third summer at the Cape that he showed her the cave where he spent the winter, a deep narrow channel cut into the sand and lined with dried seaweed. It was not filthy, as Mrs. Hopkins said, but sweet and clean, and must have been warm.

Annie was closer to this old man than she ever was to Mrs. Hopkins. Kind as Mrs. Hopkins was, and deeply as Annie felt this kindness, it was never on either side a mother-and-daughter relationship. An eagle had fallen into a wren's nest, and the wren, vaguely disturbed and anxious, knew that some day the strong pulsing wings would bear this wild, untamable spirit far beyond any altitude that she herself might reach, however much her anxious heart might yearn to follow and to understand.

CHAPTER IX

A Letter From Alabama

In the meanwhile, in Tuscumbia, Ala., in the home of one of the haughty Southrons, anxious months were piling on anxious months and tragedy was tracing its ineffaceable lines on the sensitive mouth of a young woman to whose child had come two of the most terrifying of human afflictions. This is a triumphant story, but sadness dogs it, and of all the figures that cross its pages the saddest is the young mother of Helen Keller.

She was a member of the famous Adams family of New England, but she had been born and brought up in the South. She was a girl of twenty-three when Helen was born, and she had been carefully nurtured in that witless Southern system by which a woman before marriage was kept entirely ignorant of every form of useful knowledge and was expected immediately after marriage, without training, to solve at once all the multitudinous problems connected with the stern discipline of running a large household. The women did it, but it was not because of any help or encouragement they received from the outside. Mrs. Keller did not even know how to darn a sock, and in the beginning, when socks and stockings needed hospital treatment, used to take them back to her mother in Memphis to get it. Her husband, who was some twenty years older than she, had been a captain in the Confederate army. She was his second wife. There were two sons by a former marriage: James, who was twenty-odd, and Simpson, who was thirteen.

Helen was born in a small house built near the main house (as was the custom in the South in those days) to be used as an

annex. Such a place was often appropriated by the older sons of a household, especially during the hunting season, when they and their dogs were likely to return at almost any hour during the night. The big house into which the Kellers moved a few years afterwards was not a great house in the romantic Southern tradition.

"It did not in the least," as Tom Watson said of his house in Georgia, "resemble a Grecian Temple which had been sent into exile, and which was striving, unsuccessfully, to look at ease among corn-cribs, cow-pens, horse-stables, pig-styes, chicken-houses, Negro cabins, and worm-fenced cotton fields. It did not perch upon the top of the highest hill for miles around and browbeat the whole community with its arrogant self-assertion. No: ours was just a plain house and none too large, not built out of bricks brought over from England, but of timbers from the heart of the long-leaf Georgia pine."

Only the Kellers' house was in Alabama, in the town of Tuscumbia, which then had a population of about three thousand souls, at least half of whom were Negroes.

Captain Keller was a man of influence in this community, a gentleman farmer with large holdings, and editor, besides, of a newspaper called the *North Alabamian.* He had an abundance of fine stock, excellent hunting dogs, and plenty of good things to eat and drink, but very little cash until around 1885, when President Cleveland appointed him marshal of north Alabama.

Helen's tragedy had swooped upon them in February, 1882, when she was nineteen months old. Her illness, which seems to have been acute congestion of the stomach and brain, was so severe that the doctors thought she would not live, but when she rallied they declared that she was all right and left her with her mother, to whom the following morning one half of the bitter truth pronounced itself. While she was bathing the child she noticed that when her hand accidentally passed before her eyes the lids did not close. She thought at first that it was because of the languor which had naturally followed the fever

and waited a moment before she tried again. When it was entirely clear to her that Helen saw nothing she hurried with her to Union City, Tennessee, to consult an oculist, and there learned that the little girl was irrevocably blind. No one had yet discovered that she was deaf. This they learned when they rang the bell for dinner and she did not come; when they rattled a tin can of stones which had been one of her favourite playthings and she did not look; when they spoke to her gently and there was no response; when they screamed at her and still she did not turn her head.

The chances are that the mother of a deaf-blind child to-day would know what to do or would write to Helen Keller and find out, but in those days comparatively few people knew, especially people who lived in remote villages in the war-stricken South. The young woman saw no way out. Day after day she watched the child slipping from her, yet trying, even as she herself was trying, desperately, to hold on to the few strands of communication left them. What Mrs. Keller went through during those years is something the mind shrinks from contemplating. All day long the little animal tugged at her skirts, strong and tireless; and it is to her mother's wisdom in allowing and encouraging this activity that Helen owes much of the health which she enjoyed in later years. A less patient woman would have made the child sit still. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon this. So many of the blind are affected in other parts of their bodies by the cause of their blindness, but this was never true of Helen Keller nor of Annie Sullivan, and the task that the two girls a few years later set themselves to perform was one that demanded the strength of a piano mover, as well as the slow patience of a coal miner, the determination of a Prohibitionist, and the delicacy of a poet.

Helen was thoroughly spoiled. Quick tempered and wilful, to begin with, it did not take her long, even with her handicaps, to learn that she could pretty nearly rule the household. It is difficult not to be indulgent to an afflicted child, especially

if you are not in the habit of dealing with afflicted children. "Up to the time of Miss Annie's taking charge of Helen," says one of Helen's cousins, "the whole family had let her have her way, so sorry we were for the dear child we hadn't the heart to discipline her." Her table manners (she hadn't any others) were appalling. Instead of sitting down she walked around helping herself with her fingers to whatever she wanted from other people's plates and grabbing at the dishes which were passed to take out handfuls of food. "You really ought to put that child away, Kate," said one of Mrs. Keller's brothers. "She is mentally defective and it is not pleasant to see her about." But a sister of Captain Keller's kept saying that "This child has more sense than all the Kellers, if there is ever any way to reach her mind"; and Mrs. Keller never gave up hope that there would be a way.

Mrs. Keller was a voluminous reader, and it was through her reading that the solution came when she found in Dickens' *American Notes* an account of his visit to Laura Bridgman. It had happened a long time before—forty years—and Dr. Howe and Laura Bridgman and the method of teaching, so far as she knew, were all dead. She asked a man from Boston who came through Tuscumbia selling harness if he had ever heard of a school called the Perkins Institution. He hadn't, but he promised to ask.

Someone brought Captain Keller word of an oculist in Baltimore who had been successful with cases of blindness which others thought incurable. One of the first things he did with the money which came from his position as marshal was to take Helen to see this doctor, who confirmed what the oculists in Alabama and Tennessee had said, but added that Mrs. Keller was right when she thought the child could be taught, and advised them to see Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, who was then in Washington, and had been working especially with the deaf but knew about schools for both the deaf and the blind. Dr. Bell knew that a Mr. Anagnos was director of the Perkins

Institution and advised Captain Keller to write to him. So Captain Keller went home and wrote.

And now the legend begins. No one that far-off summer day knew that a miracle was about to be performed, but later, after the miracle was accomplished, many claimed that they had known all the time. Helen has been called Mr. Anagnos' "most brilliant pupil," and it has been claimed that he, realizing the difficulties ahead, offered Annie the opportunity to teach her rather tentatively on condition that she apply herself diligently to preparation for it. Indeed, a year later, in his Annual Report, he said:

> After due deliberation I decided to make known to Miss Sullivan the contents of Captain Keller's letter and to inform her that the position would be open to her provided she could fit herself for its requirements.

It has been claimed that he gave her an examination on what she had learned and that the first time he said, "No, not yet. You are not ready." Now the truth is that Mr. Anagnos was not capable of giving an examination in the methods of instructing a deaf blind mute. He had never taught one. The main staff upon which the teacher leans is the manual alphabet, and Mr. Anagnos did not know the manual alphabet. He had learned it so as to talk with Laura Bridgman and could spell slowly a few words into her hand. He forgot it and learned it again a few years later so as to talk with Helen Keller, but was always clumsy with it. It is fortunate, in view of this, that the original letter which Mr. Anagnos wrote to Annie has been preserved. (It is almost equally unfortunate that Captain Keller's original letters have been lost.) Wrote Mr. Anagnos on August 26, 1886:

> My dear Annie,
>
> Please read the enclosed letters carefully, and let me know at your earliest convenience whether you would be disposed to consider favourably an offer of a position in the family of Mr. Keller as governess of his little deaf-mute and blind daughter.
>
> I have no other information about the standing and responsibility

of the man save that contained in his own letters: but, if you decide to be a candidate for the position, it is an easy matter to write and ask for further particulars.

I remain, dear Annie, with kind remembrances to Mrs. Hopkins,

Sincerely your friend,

M. ANAGNOS.

It was Annie herself, feeling keenly her lack of preparation for this or any other position, who asked permission to come back to South Boston to make herself ready for it, knowing that she would find there exactly what she needed in the records that Dr. Howe and his assistants had kept of their work with Laura Bridgman.

In these records she read that Dr. Howe almost from the beginning of his work with the blind had hoped to try his hand at a task on which many others had tried and failed, namely, the education of a deaf-blind mute, and that his opportunity came about five years after his school was opened when he heard of a little girl seven years old who through scarlet fever had lost her sight and hearing at the age of two. She was the daughter of a New England farmer, Daniel Bridgman, and lived in Hanover, New Hampshire, near Dartmouth College. Dr. Howe approached her parents, careful not to promise too much, and asked permission to take her with him to the Perkins Institution. The parents consented, and Laura arrived in Boston in October, 1837.

The task which Dr. Howe now undertook was so difficult that it was generally thought impossible. Only the most primitive means of communication were open to her. She could be told to go with a push or to come with a pull. She indicated her mother by making the whirling motions of a spinning wheel with her arms and her father by rubbing her hands on the side of her face where whiskers might have been. She had learned to knit and to sew a little. She was a "comely child" except for the empty hollows where eyes should have been. She was fond of pretty clothes, and scrupulously neat and orderly in her

personal habits. She was quick to perceive through touch what was going on about her and to imitate it, as when she sat for long moments holding a book before her eyes, no doubt wondering what fun other people found in it.

Dr. Howe moved slowly. He left her alone for two weeks to let her familiarize herself with her new surroundings, and then began teaching her by giving her ordinary objects—a key, a spoon, a knife, a book,—with the names pasted upon them in raised letters. She was next allowed to feel the word in raised type on a piece of paper. No attention was paid at first to the separate letters of the alphabet; the whole word was taught at once, a common practice nowadays, but an innovation when Dr. Howe made use of it. Laura followed faithfully the movements of her teachers, touching the word, *key*, on the key itself, then on the paper, then selecting it from a box of mixed type, but she did it as "a very knowing dog" might, with no understanding of what lay beneath her activity. Weeks of tedious, and apparently unprofitable, work went by, Dr. Howe acting as teacher part of the time, and his assistant, Miss Drew, the rest of the time. Then, suddenly, Dr. Howe said he could almost mark the exact moment, it dawned upon Laura that the word *key* in raised type actually meant key, and that you might, if you wanted a key, use the sign instead of the key to indicate your desire. To get this idea across, that everything has a name and that the name can be expressed by the use of an arbitrary word is the biggest step in the education of the deaf blind. Once this is done, the rest is not easy, but the rest is possible.

Having been taught the raised letters of the blind, she was next taught the finger alphabet of the deaf. This she found far easier than the metal types, and her progress once she had it at her command was much more rapid, though at the end of four months she still knew only the names of concrete substances. She was first taught nouns, then simple verbs, then adjectives with the meaning of each word explained as it was given to her. A year passed before she began to write.

Laura had infinite difficulty in learning the peculiarities of language and never really mastered idiomatic English. This was not her fault. We speak as we are taught to speak, or as we hear other people speak. Isolated words were given to her with labels attached, and attempts were made to teach her grammar before she had language enough to make any use of it. After eight years under instruction she still, said Dr. Howe, was "without so much acquaintance with language as a common child of six years." A sample lesson will illustrate the method and the difficulty. One evening—this was after she had been under instruction seven years—Dr. Howe had spent some time explaining to her the difference between "full" and "less," and had left her, satisfied that his work was done. The following day she said to the assistant teacher, who quotes it as an example of what they are constantly running into, "I am motherful and sisterful; you are brotherless," and further exemplified her learning by asking if it was derivative to-day. Investigation showed that Dr. Howe had explained that *rain* was a primitive word, *rainy*, a derivative word. The child, of course, thought she had asked, "Is it raining?"

She was eager to learn, "always ready for a lesson," and had almost a scholar's curiosity. In her reading she made lists of words she did not understand and brought them to her teacher for an explanation: "security, crime, commit, thus, propriety, constantly, character." (If you think it is easy, try explaining some of these to a child with a mental age of six.) This habit she kept up for many years. She was analytical, and prone to divide words into their component parts. For a while she had difficulty in understanding why the letters in a word had to be arranged in a certain order, why, for instance, *cat* could not be spelled t-a-c as well as c-a-t. When the word alone was defined for her she saw it as "al-one" and when she went to walk with another of the little girls she said they were going "al-two." She often had difficulty in getting an entire sentence and was once made very unhappy when she read a sentence of Dr. Howe's, "You

must not think because you are blind," and failed to read to the end, "that you cannot learn as much as other children."

Her lessons nearly always lacked spontaneity, but what was Laura's loss was the world's gain, for the entire record of her progress is set down with scientific regularity and exactitude. Her teacher kept a pencil and paper beside her to write down at once anything that Laura said which might have special interest. The day was regularly divided during most of her years of instruction, with occasional special days and special lessons. The work was done always under the supervision of Dr. Howe, whose multifarious duties in other directions made it necessary for him to delegate much of the actual labour to assistant teachers. There were, up to the time she was twenty-one years old, when her formal education was abandoned, four of these.

It was Dr. Howe's plan to give Laura all ideas of God and death himself. But Laura had touched a dead person before she came to the Institution and was still agitated when she thought of it; and she was constantly in communication with other little girls at the school. When one of them died the knowledge could not be kept from her, and two years after the child was buried Laura would adroitly lead the lesson into a discussion of Adeline, asking how long the box was that she was in, and many other similar questions. Dr. Howe had warned the teachers against allowing too much mental activity, thinking it would be harmful to one of Laura's nervous, active temperament. But Laura was curious and almost appallingly logical and, when her mind was set, not easy to turn aside.

Her questions about God and soul and heaven forced Dr. Howe to talk with her about these subjects before he felt she was ready for them. He had hoped to be able to wait until her intelligence was developed to the point where he felt she could understand what he was talking about, but a crisis was precipitated by the death of one of the blind boys.

Dr. Howe himself broke the news to Laura and tried to ex-

plain death in terms of sleep. When he used the word *soul*, Laura pounced eagerly upon it, and the doctor explained that the soul was "that which thinks and feels and hopes and loves." "And aches?" asked Laura. He could not disentangle the immaterial spirit from Laura's material concepts. "I tried to explain to her that any injury of the body was perceived by the soul; but I was clearly beyond her depth, although she was all eagerness to go on," but he felt finally that he had made her understand the difference between spiritual and material operations. After a while she asked where the boy's "think" had gone, whether it would come back, is blood dead; is breath dead; and where do horses' souls go. When she was told that horses and cats and flies have no souls, she asked if God could see. When she was assured that He could, she wanted to know if He could cry. The doctor told her that He could not and tried to explain that the spirit was separate from the body, an idea which Laura found displeasing. The doctor's handling of the child throughout this episode was beautifully tender and compassionate, but he left her in a state of bewilderment and anxiety, with the personality of God and himself pretty well mixed up in her mind. The following day she told her teacher, Miss Swift (later Mrs. Lamson), that God and the doctor knew all things, discoursed at considerable length on souls, incidentally remarking that they were white and that flies and hoppers did not have them, and sent forth a perfect deluge of questions about God. Various friends of Dr. Howe were concerned about the child's future life and felt that she ought to be instructed in the doctrines of "revealed religion." Some even tried secretly to do this. But Dr. Howe felt that the responsibility was his, and that the course he had laid out of waiting until her mind was thoroughly prepared for it was the proper one.

God was perpetually on the poor child's mind. "In the midst of a conversation on breadmaking," says her teacher, Miss Swift, "she suddenly changed the subject by asking, 'Why does not God want you in heaven now? Does He know what you

teach me? Does He know what I think? Do you? Try.' And then she held her forehead towards me, that I might read her thoughts." But Dr. Howe impressed upon her that such inquiries were to be asked of him only, and Laura learned to restrain herself, though such questions as "Why did God make troublesome mosquitoes?" and "Why did God make some people black?" were constantly escaping her. Once, when she was prevented by rain from going on an expedition, she characteristically remarked that "God was very unkind to make it rain, He knew we wanted to go."

Dr. Howe's injunction was still in force when he married Miss Julia Ward in 1843 and sailed with her for Europe. The forbidden subjects were not to be touched until his return. (He stayed away a year and a half.) The state of Laura's mind, a source of much distress to the doctor, is shown in her letters to him, filled with questions, sixteen such as the following in one short epistle:

> What can I first say to God when I am wrong? Would he send me good thoughts & forgive me when I am very sad for doing wrong? Why does he not love wrong people if they love him?

One day while everyone else was at church she found the Book of Psalms in Braille and had her first direct contact with the angry God of the Old Testament. Pale and excited, with visions of judgment ahead of her, she flew to the first teacher who arrived. In answer to her frightened questions Miss Swift (with Dr. Howe in her mind) had to go against her own convictions (which were that when Laura asked a question on no matter what subject she was entitled to the most intelligent answer the teacher could give) and tell her that the Old Testament was a book she could not understand and must wait until the doctor came home. Dr. Howe in answer to her frantic questions wrote:

> Your mind is young and weak, and cannot understand hard things, but by and by it will be stronger, and you will be able to understand

hard things, and I and my wife will help Miss Swift to show you all things that now you do not know.

This repression had a lasting effect upon Laura.

Anti-slavery work, his own uncertain health, political troubles in Hungary, the U.S. Sanitary Commission, state charities, and other matters occupied a great deal of Dr. Howe's time when he returned, and though the affectionate bond between him and Laura was never broken, he was never again in as close touch with her as he had been before his trip to Europe.

Laura became a rigid and uncompromising sectarian, a member of the Baptist faith which was that of her parents. Her intellectual development practically stopped when her special teacher left her, and from that time on her quiet life was divided between the Perkins Institution in the winter and her mother's home in New Hampshire in the summer. Many people came to see her (though she was no longer the centre of attention she had once been), and sometimes at the Howes' she met some of the most celebrated men and women of the day, her teachers on these occasions translating "such of the talk as was most comprehensible to her." She hoarded her simple pleasures and stretched them out as far as possible. She enjoyed company, for instance, but never allowed herself to pay more than one visit on a single day.

Her natural wells of affection had never been allowed to gush forth normally. In view of what he thought her future life might be, Dr. Howe did not caress her as he did the other children, and once, at least, keenly wounded her by kissing another little girl when she was present. She already had when she came to the Institution such a sense of propriety as only Puritan surroundings can give, and this was accentuated by her life at Perkins. She despised persons of inferior intellect, and as a child quickly learned to take advantage of them in making them do little services for her, and, adds the doctor, with a rare touch of humour, "in various ways she shows her Anglo-Saxon blood."

An excellent speller herself, she always corrected the spelling of those who talked with her, and not always gently. Like all the blind, she abhorred dust which dulls the sensitiveness of the touch. She wished only clean hands to touch hers, and once, when one of the girls emerged from a room with a dustpan and began spelling to her with grimy fingers, Laura stopped her peremptorily by pounding into her hand with special emphasis on each letter: "Wash your dirty paws!"

To be constantly with a person in Laura's condition is a great nervous and physical strain. All of her teachers felt it, and Miss Swift in her book on Laura speaks of the great fatigue which Laura's teachers endured for her sake. Miss Paddock, who stayed with her for several months, finally went to Dr. Howe and told him that she could no longer endure the terrible silence.

Laura was never taught to articulate. This was later a matter of some regret to Dr. Howe, for it was obvious from the sixty-odd various "noises" she had to indicate persons and the few words that she did learn, "Abby," "Doctor," "Tom," that it might have been done.

Laura was not the only deaf blind mute pupil that Dr. Howe had. Oliver Caswell, who came to the Institution when he was twelve, having lost sight and hearing through scarlet fever at the age of three, was in some ways more satisfactory. For one thing, he was started with the manual alphabet instead of the metal types, and his initial progress was much faster. But Oliver's mind was placid, and while he lived a long and happy life (dying in 1896 at the age of sixty) his intellectual attainments were never noteworthy. Other pupils, too, were taught, but none had a better command of language than Laura, whose achievements had reached what was then considered the high-water mark for all time.

Fifty years lay between the time Laura came to the Perkins Institution and the time Annie Sullivan went to Alabama. General interest in Laura had decreased, and there was no thought in the mind of anyone that such interest as she had

once excited could ever again be awakened in one of her kind. It was a sad story, this of Laura's, and Annie was sick at heart with forebodings when she thought of what lay ahead of her.

From the Reports she learned almost as much about the doctor as she did about his pupil. This description of him by his friend (and Annie's *quondam* friend) F. B. Sanborn tells excellently what she learned:

> He was born to benefit others, and by choice he selected for his benefactions those who could least repay his service with their own —the blind, the deaf, the insane, the idiotic. He thought it unsuitable to practise medicine and surgery for money; nor was he at any time very willing to sell his service, preferring to bestow it without recompense. He would have agreed heartily with that definition of his class among men which said, "A gentleman is one who has something to give, not something to sell"; and there was, indeed, some pride mingled with his benevolence, showing that he had not reached that elevated degree of saintliness where humility is the chief requisite. His was by no means a faultless character. He had the strength and also the weakness of an active temperament; he was hasty and sometimes harsh or exacting, as well as tender and generous. He could be as capricious and as persistent as if caprice and persistence were not antagonistic qualities. He loved power, though he seldom sought it; and was often unjust to his opponents, of whom, first and last, he had a great many. To his intimates he was the most charming of companions, with that "terrible gift of familiarity," of which the Frenchman speaks; he was then full of good-humour, appreciative, affable; but sometimes, and to some persons, he was anything but charming. He inspired respect, however, where he did not win affection; and though he was sometimes, as Carlyle said of himself, "gey ill to deal wi'," he was easily forgiven for the temperamental and surface faults of a nature essentially superior, noble, and winning. In aspect as well as in character he was in his prime a true type of the educated American—lithe, impetuous, an Arab in figure and in horsemanship; dark in eye and hair, but with a glowing colour and a manner that bespoke energy tempered by inward courtesy.

He was able to treat the blind like other people, and while no one more deeply understood or sympathized with their position than he, he never allowed his pity to obscure his judg-

ment, and in all of his work for the blind he never lost sight of the fact, known to all who have worked with both the blind and the deaf, and so hard to explain to anyone else, that deafness, that is, deafness before language has been attained, is a far greater affliction than blindness, no matter at what period of life the blindness comes. "Language is to the mind more even than the right hand is to the body . . . more than light to the eye."

There is one other point about Dr. Howe which is perhaps worth emphasizing. This is his lawlessness, shown in his sympathy for the revolutionists in various European countries, and, in this country, in his anti-slavery work and in his work for the unfortunate where he followed always what *he* believed to be right, regardless of the weight of opinion on the other side. He was his own law, one of the few traits he and Annie Sullivan had in common.

Annie had several advantages over the doctor. One was that the job had already been done, after a fashion, and was known to be possible. One was her youth, which carried with it strength and health. One was a quick intuitive imagination. One was her own blindness. Dr. Howe, to see what blindness was like, had worn bandages over his eyes for several days. Annie knew what it was like, and even in reading his reports she had to give her eyes long periods of rest so as to be able to go on.

CHAPTER X

The Great Deliverance

ANNIE was in a storm of excitement at the Institution. Everyone was immensely kind to her. The girls thought she was wonderfully brave to be willing to go so far away into so savage a country, and were dazzled by her prospects of adventure and her "liberal salary," as Mr. Anagnos later called it, of twenty-five dollars a month. Collectively they bought a doll for Helen, and Laura Bridgman dressed it, pausing at intervals to spell out advice to Annie, mainly about Helen's spiritual welfare, advice which she continued for several years in letters addressed to "My dear sister in Christ."

Mrs. Hopkins helped get her clothes ready and made over especially for her a lavender dress with flowers on it which she herself had worn as a girl. Except for this and the graduation dress (both of them Sunday dresses in the good old-fashioned sense of the term) Annie had only stout serviceable New England garments, all of which were entirely unsuitable for the more equable climate of Alabama. Apparently no one remembered that March in Alabama is the beginning of spring.

There was, one almost says of course, another operation on her eyes. It was slight—the eyes were somewhat crossed—but it was unwisely postponed until a few days before her departure. Miss Annette Rogers paid for it and gave Annie as a farewell present a flower-covered book of sermons. Mr. Anagnos loaned her money for her railroad fare and gave her a garnet ring. She left Boston on Monday, elegantly attired in a thick grey dress and a grey bonnet with bright red ribbons tied under the

chin. For professional equipment she carried some kindergarten beads and cards, two or three Braille readers, and a Braille slate.

She and Mrs. Hopkins had bought the ticket, and, having had no experience with extra-Massachusetts travel, had failed to get one that went straight through. From a fragment of a letter which survives we know that it snowed heavily the night after she left Boston, and that by the time she reached Philadelphia, which looked "like an immense cemetery in the white stillness of the winter morning," the train was two hours late because of the storm. In Philadelphia she changed to another train. By the time she reached Baltimore the sun was shining and her heavy clothing was uncomfortable. It was in Baltimore that she had her first sight of Negroes *en masse*. The station swarmed with them. She was late reaching Washington, where she was to have been met by a Mr. Ryder who was a friend of Mrs. Hopkins or Mr. Anagnos or somebody. He was a school teacher and had been obliged to go back to his school, but he had left word with "the woman in the station whose business it is to look after unprotected women and provide them with good advice and a list of respectable hotels," that he would be back later. Annie must wait in the station. She tried, without success, to get a train out of Washington. There were trains, but the idiosyncrasies of her ticket were such that she could not take one until the following morning. Even so, there were several more changes to be made before she reached Tuscumbia. Not knowing what else to do, she sat down and cried, thus adding further injury to the eyes which had already been severely irritated by cinders and coal dust. Mr. Ryder came about the middle of the afternoon, and Annie, who was by that time in no condition to like anyone, didn't like him. But he secured a room for her at the Riggs Hotel, about three minutes' walk from the Capitol (she thought she had never seen anything half so imposing and magnificent as the Capitol), and offered to show her the city.

But I was too anxious to take very much interest in what I saw [she wrote Mrs. Hopkins], and I did not find Mr. Ryder especially entertaining. He is a typical schoolmaster, and as dull as they make them. He has a voice like those wooden clappers children play with. I was glad when he bade me good-night. The porter showed me to my room, and I am sure a more wretched girl never slept under that hospitable roof. The man who sold us that ticket ought to be hanged, and I'd be willing to act as hangman. I was obliged to change at Lynchburg, Roanoke, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. Our first stop was at Lynchburg, a dingy, dirty, rummy place.

She cried so much that the conductor on the train from Chattanooga asked her when he took her ticket if "any of her folks was dead" and tried to soothe her with sandwiches and peppermints and stories of the kindness and hospitality of the Southern people. The further details of the journey are lost. She arrived in Tuscumbia at six-thirty on Wednesday afternoon, hot and miserable in her woollen dress and winter bonnet, and with her eyes shockingly red and swollen. She probably looked as forlorn as she was, but how forlorn that was, she wrote to Mrs. Hopkins,

. . . not even you can imagine. I was lonely, but somehow I was not sorry I came. The loneliness in my heart was an old acquaintance. I had been lonely all my life.

The first person who spoke to me as I stepped from the train was James Keller, Captain Keller's eldest son, and though he simply spoke my name with a rising inflection, I knew that we should never be friends. He said Mrs. Keller was in the carriage waiting for me. When she spoke, a great weight rolled off my heart, there was so much sweetness and refinement in her voice.

She was surprised to find Mrs. Keller so young looking—not much older than herself.

I thought [she continued], as we drove to my new home through the little town of Tuscumbia, which is more like a New England village than a town; for the roads—there were no streets—were lined with blossoming fruit trees, and the ploughed fields smelt good (I think the earthy smell is the best of all spring odours), "Certainly this

ANNIE SULLIVAN
August, 1887

Studio of Nachman & Meertier

CAPT. ARTHUR H. KELLER, MRS. KELLER, and their daughters MILDRED and HELEN

is a good time and a pleasant place to begin my life work." When Mrs. Keller pointed out her house at the end of a long, narrow lane, I became so excited and eager to see my little pupil that I could scarcely sit still in my seat. I felt like getting out and pushing the horse along faster. I wondered that Mrs. Keller could endure such a slow beast. I have since discovered that all things move slowly in the South.

Captain Keller was waiting for them in the yard. Almost breathlessly Annie asked where Helen was, but fervently as she wished to see her, she was afraid. "The Irish," says Miss Katharine Tynan, "have their strange compunctions and sensitivenesses. I don't think an ugly man, or an ugly woman, for the matter of that, is gilded by any circumstances." If Helen had been deformed or repulsive this story would have had the same beginning, but it is unlikely that it would have had the same ending.

Helen stood in the doorway, her brown hair tumbled, her pinafore soiled, her black shoes tied with white strings. The Kellers had been meeting every train for two days, and the child had known by the bustle in the house that something extraordinary was about to happen. When she realized that the family had returned she rushed at her new teacher with such force that she would have upset her if Captain Keller had not stood just behind her. She resisted all Annie's efforts to embrace or kiss her, jerked her bag away from her, and flew into a temper when Mrs. Keller tried to get it back. Annie diverted her by giving her her watch, and they went upstairs together, where Annie made her understand by letting her feel a trunk in the hall and by other signs that while there was no candy in the bag there was some in the trunk which would be along later. Helen seemed to understand. It was encouraging.

The signs that Helen had devised on her own account showed that she had intelligence. She asked for bread and butter by going through the motions of cutting bread and spreading it, for ice cream by turning an imaginary freezer, for cake by beat-

ing imaginary batter in her hand. She made the motions of putting on glasses to indicate her father, laid her hand against her face to indicate her mother, and sucked her thumb to indicate her baby sister Mildred, in all of which she acted very much like Laura Bridgman. Annie was enormously relieved by Helen's appearance.

Somehow [she wrote] I had expected to see a pale, delicate child —I suppose I got the idea from Dr. Howe's description of Laura Bridgman when she came to the Institution. But there's nothing pale or delicate about Helen. She is large, strong, and ruddy, and as unrestrained in her movements as a young colt. She has none of those nervous habits that are so noticeable and so distressing in blind children. Her body is well formed and vigorous, and Mrs. Keller says she has not been ill a day since the illness that deprived her of her sight and hearing. She has a fine head, and it is set on her shoulders just right. Her face is hard to describe. It is intelligent, but lacks mobility, or soul, or something. Her mouth is large and finely shaped. You see at a glance that she is blind. One eye is larger than the other, and protrudes noticeably. She rarely smiles.

It was Annie's plan to move slowly, first winning Helen's love. "I shall not attempt to conquer her by force alone," she said. She had yet to learn (she began to learn it the following day) that Helen had always done exactly as she pleased and, like all tyrants, domestic and royal, intended to keep on. She learned that sometimes it was impossible for days to comb her hair; that force was necessary to get her to button her shoes or wash her face, and that force always brought on a fit of temper. She was exceedingly strong, and since she fought with the complete abandon of a wild animal she was a dangerous adversary. Sometimes members of the family were black and blue from her assaults. Helen is puzzled now when she considers this conduct of hers and wonders what the behaviourists would say about it. She had been surrounded by kindness and had no pattern to work from, but the baffled rage within her gave her so successful a fighting technique that in one of their early struggles

she succeeded in knocking out one of her teacher's front teeth. For a few days it looked as if Annie Sullivan were beaten.

She recognized at once that her biggest problem was to get Helen under some kind of control without breaking her spirit, and saw almost immediately that it could not be done while Helen was with her family, none of whom could bear to see the child punished. Annie, on the other hand, was so used to affliction that she knew no other course but to treat an afflicted person just as she would have treated a normal person. She tried to begin at once teaching Helen to spell. The first word, *doll*, was spelled into Helen's hand when the doll that Laura dressed was presented to her. This ended in a tantrum when Helen misunderstood one of her teacher's movements and thought she was trying to take the doll away. *Cake* was the next word, spelled when a piece of cake was given her. She repeated the finger movements with some interest and seemed to enjoy fussing with the kindergarten materials, but there was no way to know when she was going into one of her rages and no way to stop her until she had worn herself out.

The two girls locked horns one morning at the breakfast table. Annie had been profoundly shocked by Helen's table manners, and when the child tried to pick morsels out of Annie's plate with her fingers (as she did out of all the other plates) Annie refused to allow it. This precipitated a scene, and the family, none of whom had finished breakfast, left the room. Annie locked the door and kept on eating while Helen threw herself on the floor and kicked and screamed (weird, unearthly screams) and tried to jerk Annie's chair out from under her. Curiosity finally got the better of her, and she climbed up to see what her teacher was doing.

I let her see that I was eating, but did not let her put her hand in the plate [says Annie]. She pinched me, and I slapped her every time she did it. Then she went all round the table to see who was there, and finding no one but me, she seemed bewildered. After a few minutes she came back to her place and began to eat her break-

fast with her fingers. I gave her a spoon, which she threw on the floor. I forced her out of the chair and made her pick it up. Finally I succeeded in getting her back in her chair again, and held the spoon in her hand, compelling her to take up the food with it and put it in her mouth. In a few minutes she yielded and finished her breakfast peaceably. Then we had another tussle over folding her napkin. When she had finished, she threw it on the floor and ran toward the door. Finding it locked, she began to kick and scream all over again. It was another hour before I succeeded in getting her napkin folded. Then I let her out into the warm sunshine and went up to my room and threw myself on the bed, exhausted. I had a good cry and felt better.

Annie's eyes were very much inflamed, and she was hideously disappointed.

I had an idea [she wrote] that I could win the love and confidence of my little pupil by the same means that I should use if she could see and hear. But I soon found that I was cut off from all the usual approaches to the child's heart. She accepted everything I did for her as a matter of course, and refused to be caressed, and there was no way of appealing to her affection or sympathy or childish love of approbation. She would or she wouldn't, and there was an end of it. Thus it is, we study, plan, and prepare ourselves for a task, and when the hour for action arrives, we find that the system we have followed with such labour and pride does not fit the occasion; and then there's nothing for us to do but rely on something within us, some innate capacity for knowing and doing, which we did not know we possessed until the hour of our great need brought it to light.

The great need had made her feel sure that she had to get Helen away from her family. Mrs. Keller finally consented and persuaded Captain Keller to agree. It was he who suggested the little annex near the old Keller homestead, a charming vine-covered refuge with one big room where Helen and Annie stayed, and one small room where a Negro boy slept whose business was to make fires and run errands. The furniture was changed so that Helen would not recognize it, and she was taken there after a ride so that she would not know where she was. Meals were sent to them, and the family was allowed to

visit them every day on condition that Helen was to know nothing of the visits.

The experiment began badly.

She was greatly excited at first [Annie wrote], and kicked and screamed herself into a sort of stupor; but when supper was brought she ate heartily and seemed brighter, although she refused to let me touch her. She devoted herself to her dolls the first evening, and when it was bedtime she undressed very quietly; but when she felt me get into bed with her, she jumped out on the other side, and nothing that I could do would induce her to get in again. But I was afraid she would take cold, and I insisted that she must go to bed. We had a terrific tussle, I can tell you. The struggle lasted for nearly two hours. I never saw such strength and endurance in a child. But fortunately for us both, I am a little stronger, and quite as obstinate when I set out. I finally succeeded in getting her on the bed and covered her up, and she lay curled up as near the edge of the bed as possible.

The next morning she was very docile, but evidently homesick. She kept going to the door, as if she expected someone, and every now and then she would touch her cheek, which is her sign for her mother, and shake her head sadly. She played with her dolls more than usual, and would have nothing to do with me.

It must have been the following morning, or perhaps a morning or two later, that Captain Keller, on his inspection trip, looked through the window and saw Helen sitting on the floor, still in her nightgown, the picture of stubbornness and despair. She had waked in a bad humour, and when her teacher gave her her clothes to put on, she threw them on the floor. Annie let her understand that she could not have breakfast until she was dressed. At ten o'clock she was still sitting on the floor. Captain Keller stopped by his cousin's house and with tears in his eyes said, "Leila, I've a good mind to send that Yankee girl back to Boston," but Leila dissuaded him, and within a short time Annie's plan had vindicated itself:

March 20, 1887.

My heart is singing for joy this morning. A miracle has happened! The light of understanding has shone upon my little pupil's mind, and behold, all things are changed!

The wild little creature of two weeks ago has been transformed into a gentle child. She is sitting by me as I write, her face serene and happy, crocheting a long red chain of Scotch wool. She learned the stitch this week, and is very proud of the achievement. When she succeeded in making a chain that would reach across the room, she patted herself on the arm and put the first work of her hands lovingly against her cheek. She lets me kiss her now, and when she is in a particularly gentle mood, she will sit in my lap for a minute or two; but she does not return my caresses. The great step—the step that counts—has been taken. The little savage has learned her first lesson in obedience, and finds the yoke easy. It now remains my pleasant task to direct and mould the beautiful intelligence that is beginning to stir in the child-soul. Already people remark the change in Helen. Her father looks in at us morning and evening as he goes to and from his office, and sees her contentedly stringing her beads or making horizontal lines on her sewing card, and exclaims, "How quiet she is!" When I came, her movements were so insistent that one always felt there was something unnatural and almost weird about her. I have noticed also that she eats much less, a fact which troubles her father so much that he is anxious to get her home. He says she is homesick. I don't agree with him; but I suppose we shall have to leave our little bower very soon.

Helen has learned several nouns this week. "M-u-g" and "m-i-l-k" have given her more trouble than other words. When she spells "milk," she points to the mug, and when she spells "mug," she makes the sign for pouring or drinking, which shows that she has confused the words. She has no idea yet that everything has a name.

Yesterday I had the little Negro boy come in when Helen was having her lesson, and learn the letters, too. This pleased her very much and stimulated her ambition to excel Percy. She was delighted if he made a mistake, and made him form the letter over several times. When he succeeded in forming it to suit her, she patted him on his woolly head so vigorously that I thought some of his slips were intentional.

One day this week Captain Keller brought Belle, a setter of which he is very proud, to see us. He wondered if Helen would recognize her old playmate. Helen was giving Nancy a bath and didn't notice the dog at first. She usually feels the softest step and throws out her arms to ascertain if anyone is near her. Belle didn't seem very anxious to attract her attention. I imagine she has been rather roughly handled sometimes by her little mistress. The dog hadn't been in

the room more than half a minute, however, before Helen began to sniff, and dumped the doll into the wash-bowl and felt about the room. She stumbled upon Belle, who was crouching near the window where Captain Keller was standing. It was evident that she recognized the dog; for she put her arms round her neck and squeezed her. Then Helen sat down by her and began to manipulate her claws. We couldn't think for a second what she was doing; but when we saw her make the letters "d-o-l-l" on her own fingers, we knew that she was trying to teach Belle to spell.

They stayed alone for about two weeks, and when they returned to the big house Annie was determined not to lose the ground she had gained. The family promised not to interfere but to help, and Annie began teaching them all the manual alphabet.

By the first of April she and Helen were able to spend most of their time out of doors. Annie continued to teach her little pupil to string beads and knit and sew kindergarten cards. She went through gymnastic exercises with her at eleven and at twelve marked off an hour to devote to the learning of new words. She never stopped spelling. Whatever they did—whether they visited the horses and mules, the turkeys and chickens, the dogs, the pump, or the woodpile—it was all done to the running accompaniment of finger spelling, Annie first spelling the words, Helen repeating the movements on her own fingers. Mrs. Keller offered to get a nurse, but Annie felt that she already had enough on her hands. "Besides," she said, "I like to have Helen depend on me for everything, and I find it much easier to teach her things at odd moments than at set times."

By March 31st Helen knew eighteen nouns and three verbs and was beginning to ask for words herself. There had been difficulties, as with *mug* and *milk*, and it had been a strenuous month. Hardly a waking moment but in one way or another it had been devoted to Helen. The young people in the village showed no interest in the dowdy Yankee girl (either then or later), and she was too absorbed and too troubled with her eyes to care.

On April 5th she wrote Mrs. Hopkins a special letter, for it was on April 5th that Helen learned that there was a key to the terrible dark and soundless universe against which her small spirit had been beating itself out, and perceived vaguely that there might be beauty and even harmony in it where she had known only chaos.

How many thousands of times this part of the story has been told! Let Annie tell it herself:

> In a previous letter [this to Mrs. Hopkins] I think I wrote you that "mug" and "milk" had given Helen more trouble than all the rest. She confused the nouns with the verb "drink." She didn't know the word for "drink," but went through the pantomime of drinking whenever she spelled "mug" or "milk." This morning, while she was washing, she wanted to know the name for "water." When she wants to know the name for anything, she points to it and pats my hand. I spelled "w-a-t-e-r" and thought no more about it until after breakfast. Then it occurred to me that with the help of this new word I might succeed in straightening out the "mug-milk" difficulty. We went out to the pump-house, and I made Helen hold her mug under the spout while I pumped. As the cold water gushed forth, filling the mug, I spelled "w-a-t-e-r" in Helen's free hand. The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face. She spelled "water" several times. Then she dropped on the ground and asked for its name and pointed to the pump and the trellis, and suddenly turning round she asked for my name. I spelled "Teacher." Just then the nurse brought Helen's little sister into the pump-house, and Helen spelled "baby" and pointed to the nurse. All the way back to the house she was highly excited, and learned the name of every object she touched, so that in a few hours she had added thirty new words to her vocabulary. Here are some of them: *Door*, *open*, *shut*, *give*, *go*, *come*, and a great many more.

It was a tremendous experience. Religions have been founded on less.

But if this April 5, 1887, was a momentous day for Helen, it was no less so for her teacher, not because Helen had at last got

a firm grip on the key to language, but because that night Helen, for the first time of her own accord, snuggled into bed with her and kissed her. "I thought my heart would burst, it was so full of joy," she said. The loneliness that had tracked her since Jimmie's death was gone now. Struggle and sorrow and disappointment lay ahead, but there was someone now to share it. Nothing could ever be as dreadful as it had been.

CHAPTER XI
Dedication

TEACHER and pupil raced eagerly ahead. Annie abandoned the idea of regular lessons and decided to treat Helen like a two-year-old child, not theoretically, but literally. By observing a small cousin of Helen's, a baby fifteen months old, she learned that before the baby said a word she understood what the people around her were saying. All day long words were whirling around her (as around any normal child), and she knew what they were. When someone said, "Give me a flower" or "Shut the door" she knew exactly what they meant, though she could not pronounce any of the sentences herself. Why, then, could not the same process be followed with Helen, only substituting the fingers for the voice? "I shall assume," Annie wrote, "that she has the normal child's capacity of assimilation and imitation. I shall use complete sentences in talking to her." In this way Helen was taught the words that are almost impossible to explain.

The teacher never made conversation for the sake of conversation. It was always for the purpose of enlarging the child's experience, and as the experience grew, the vocabulary grew. She wasted no time in examining her pupil. "I am convinced," she wrote, "that the time spent by the teacher in digging out of the child what she has put into him, for the sake of satisfying herself that it has taken root, is so much time thrown away. It is much better, I think, to assume that the child is doing his part. . . ."

All that was happening she poured out in her letters to Mrs. Hopkins. She did not have time, inclination, or eyesight for

miscellaneous correspondence, but she wrote once a week to Mrs. Hopkins. The first time she wrote Mr. Anagnos was on April 6th, when she received her first salary payment. Mr. Anagnos responded with a generous letter assuring her that it was entirely unnecessary for her to repay him for her railroad fare until she had a bank account, and that it would give him great pleasure to supply her with funds whenever she needed them. Mr. Anagnos had the commercial sagacity of the Greek, and though his salary was never large, he was able by investment so to increase it that when he died he was comparatively a rich man. He urged her to get a blank book and keep an exact account, without comments of her own, of what Helen learned and did every day. Words should be preserved in chronological order as she learned them and a biographical sketch of Helen should be written. He teasingly said that he had no doubt of Annie's ultimate success, provided the citadel of her heart could resist the bombardments of some physician, for which profession she seemed to have an incurable weakness. The kindergarten for which he had worked so many years was to be dedicated on the 19th of this month.

He need not have worried about Annie's heart. She was singularly free from distractions. She was with Helen all day, and in the evening she used to sit in her bedroom (a great old-fashioned high-ceilinged bedroom) crooning to one of Helen's dolls ("All of my life I have played with dolls," she confesses) and yearning for someone to read to her. No one in the Keller household read aloud.

Life in Tuscumbia was rugged when compared with institutional life in Boston. "We were up early," she says, "and to bed with the birds. There was much work to be done in the house and out of it. The Kellers raised nearly everything we needed—vegetables, fruits, pigs, turkeys, chickens, and lambs. For light we used kerosene lamps. We cut our own wood, and pumped the water we needed. Mrs. Keller made her own butter, lard, bacon, and hams, and did all the sewing for the children.

She was celebrated for her preserves and dried fruits. She made her own pickles and sauces, jellies, and wines. I never saw canned or bottled goods in those days."

In a contemporary fragment Annie says:

> Southern women are fine cooks. The frugal North never tasted such delicious viands as are concocted here. I'd rather be a good cook than the Czar of Russia—a good dinner is a great achievement. I particularly like the smell of a roast pig, and a broiled partridge fills my soul with delight.

Under Mrs. Keller's teaching she abundantly realized her ambition. "Let's go to see Annie," her friends say to-day, "and get something good to eat."

She thought Mrs. Keller's a hard life:

> From dawn to dark she was at it—too tired when night came to protest against the hunting dogs' occupation of the hearth, but she did find time to tend her flowers, of which she was passionately fond. She raised the most beautiful roses I have ever seen outside of a hothouse.
>
> Of course, no one would choose such hardships as these, and Mrs. Keller could not think of her children enduring them. In Memphis she had been a carefree Southern girl, but she endured the life of a pioneer woman without a word of a complaint. I admired her tremendously. After a day of lard making she would appear at the table weary, but interested in the news that Captain Keller brought from town. After putting the baby, Mildred, to bed, as likely as not she would take a hand at euchre.

Annie found the Southern gentlemen trying. She discovered that there were definite limits to Southern chivalry when one of them remarked in her presence that he would rather die than see his daughters work for a living. She also discovered that no kind feelings were wasted on the Yankee. Captain Keller and most of his friends had fought in the Confederate army, and even Mrs. Keller believed that the Southern cause was so right it was distressing to think about it.

Middle-aged Southerners [Annie says] were in the midst of the perplexities of men standing between two eras, one dead, the other just born. Bitter towards the victors, scornful of the new order, impervious to new ideas, sceptical of science, economic necessity could impose upon them new hardships but not a new attitude. Education would be, as it always must be, the great emancipator, but it was the young generations who would learn—it was they who would be the new South.

The Civil War had been fought and won, but the issues that brought it forth were not settled. Futile arguments went on endlessly. With fiery Quixotism I took up the cudgels for the opponents of the South, hot with indignation when they attacked Sumner or were lukewarm towards Lincoln. I was always ready to plunge into deep water after a straw. My old idol, General Butler, came in for many a broadside.

Captain Keller was an excellent story-teller, one of the best I ever listened to. He was very hospitable and seldom came home without bringing a guest. He thought everything Southern desirable, noble, and eternal.

Conversations at the table turned nearly always to the war, and slowly some of the ideas Annie had learned at Perkins became unsettled, just as Perkins had unsettled much that she had learned at Tewksbury. Her progress was always an unsteady hitching forward by a series of violent jerks.

She found Southern men arrogant and boastful even in small things like the flavour of their peaches and the size of their watermelons.

"I reckon you have never seen a finer Jersey cow than this," one of them said to her one day when she was letting Helen feel the silken hide of the animal.

"No, sir," she answered truthfully, for she had never seen a Jersey cow of any kind before.

She found that the young men admired inexperienced, impractical, immature girls and spoke disparagingly of girls who made, or wanted to make, their own way in the world. To whatever parties were given in Tuscumbia that year Annie was not invited. Her clothes were shabby, she took no pains to hide her

intelligence, and she did not dance. She learned to play cards with the older people, and she went with Helen to her little parties, but of normal social activity with people her own age she had none.

But [she says] I found life in the South pleasant when I stopped discussing the Civil War. There was more leisure, more sociability, more enjoyment of the little pleasures of existence, less strenuous interest in culture, less effort to stem the tide of life that can never be stemmed.

The feudal attitude towards work and women I found puzzling, but I liked the warm friendliness of the Southern people better than the orderly polished hardness of Puritan Boston.

I was most bewildered by the attitude of the white people towards the Negroes. On the whole I thought they were kind to them, and far more patient with their peculiarities than the people of the North would have been under similar circumstances. If the Negroes "kept their place" all went well. They were allowed many liberties which would not have been tolerated in the North which boasted of giving them their freedom. They were seldom punished for peccadilloes, but for serious offenses were treated with great cruelty. Always there was a pain in my heart when I thought about the coloured people. I was distressed that their colour, which they could not help, should debar them from so many of the comforts and satisfactions of life. Their poverty troubled me. Discussion failed to help matters, for we all lost our tempers. But I confess that for a long time I did not think of them often; I was too interested in my own affairs to care very much what became of the race problem.

In my weekly letter to Mrs. Hopkins during the first year I was in Tuscumbia I penned many long accounts of the battleground of the dinner and breakfast tables. Years afterwards, when I saw the large box in which she kept these letters,[1] I wondered how I had any time left for teaching Helen. I wish these letters were available now. I am sure that they present a livelier picture of the situation and my emotions than I can give to-day. They told simply, without any striving

[1]The letters were borrowed from Mrs. Hopkins by John Macy when he was editing Miss Keller's *The Story of My Life*. Afterwards they were stored in the attic of Miss Keller's house in Wrentham, where a leak in the roof reduced them to pulp. Fortunately a number of them were preserved in his "Supplementary Account" in *The Story of My Life*, and a few scattered fragments remain which were copied at the time but not printed.

for effect, how an ignorant, opinionated young woman proceeded with her work of teaching a handicapped little girl in unfamiliar and disturbing surroundings, and how her own mind developed as she went along. There must have been vivid personalities recorded in those letters, and high hopes. The spring must have seemed pleasanter and the peach blossoms sweeter as the little girl's mind grew and bloomed. There must have been interest expressed in political campaigns. There must have been accounts of exciting horseback rides along red country lanes, made adventurous by the deep gullies torn out of the luscious red soil by the winter rains. Negro baptizings and preaching, Presbyterianism, Southern laziness, poverty, hospitality, kindness, charming Southern girls, silly Southern youths—all came in for their share of comment—everything that crossed the path along which an eager young woman was seeking happiness and achievement.

Frequently, when exasperated by what seemed to me unendurable rudeness, I would decide to pack my trunk and depart.

It must have been an expression of her feelings during one of these periods that brought about the following passages from a letter of Mr. Anagnos:

DEAR ANNIE,

I am aware of the many difficulties of your position and of the thorns which are scattered on your pathway; but take as little notice of them as possible. Remember always the following words of Horace,—"*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audatior ito*," which may be thus interpreted in your case,—"Yield not to trials, but on the contrary, meet them with fortitude." Do not allow yourself to be troubled by petty annoyances, or to remember them and harbour ill feelings even temporarily against anyone, however ignorant or indiscreet he or she may be. Look steadily at the polar star of your work, and I have not the slightest doubt but that you will weather all storms and reach the port of success. Perseverance, patience, tact, and charity will help you to conquer the most formidable difficulties. Then the crown will be yours as the prize of victory. Your strenuous efforts have been so far richly rewarded, and you have good reasons to be proud of your achievements.

After a period of vacillation [she continues] I finally settled down. I fixed my thoughts steadfastly on improving my mind and devoted

myself wholeheartedly to Helen's education. Thereafter I was too busy to bother myself over the questions we had argued. I was contented at the end of the day in proportion to the number of new words Helen had acquired and the skill she had put into expressing the thoughts which were springing up in her mind thick as grass in the springtime. People came and went, touched my hand, got in my way, but they seldom distracted me from my task.

She still had no patience with tedious people. From a letter to Mrs. Hopkins:

I have been interrupted a score of times since I began this letter. The minister, a dull, kindly soul, has just gone. Poor man, his heart is full of trouble because his hens have stopped laying so soon. He has done everything he ever heard of to make them see the error of their ways, but thus far without success, and the poor man is at his wit's end. Really, I can't believe that every well intentioned bore who knocks at our door is sent by God, unless indeed He sends them about in order to get a little peace Himself.

She was constantly worried about her unfitness for her work, her lack of preparation.

I am beginning to suspect all elaborate and special systems of education. They seem to me to be built up on the supposition that every child is a kind of idiot who must be taught to think. Whereas, if the child is left to himself, he will think more and better, if less showily. Let him go and come freely, let him touch real things and combine his impressions for himself, instead of sitting indoors at a little round table, while a sweet-voiced teacher suggests that he build a stone wall with his wooden blocks, or make a rainbow out of strips of coloured paper, or plant straw trees in bead flower-pots. Such teaching fills the mind with artificial associations that must be got rid of before the child can develop independent ideas out of actual experiences.

Helen is learning adjectives and adverbs as easily as she learned nouns. The idea always precedes the word. She had signs for *small* and *large* long before I came to her. If she wanted a small object and was given a large one, she would shake her head and take up a tiny bit of the skin of one hand between the thumb and finger of the other. If she wanted to indicate something large, she spread the fingers of both hands as wide as she could, and brought them to-

gether, as if to clasp a big ball. The other day I substituted the words *small* and *large* for these signs, and she at once adopted the words and discarded the signs. I can now tell her to bring me a large book or a small plate, to go upstairs slowly, to run fast, and to walk quickly. This morning she used the conjunction *and* for the first time. I told her to shut the door, and she added, "and lock."

In one of her letters to Mrs. Hopkins Annie says that the little red dictionary she gave her had been worth more than anything she had learned in school.

But her greatest difficulty was still, as it always had been and always would be, her eyes. As late as May 22nd she writes:

My eyes are still much inflamed and swollen; but I think the operation was a success and that I should have got over the effect of it more quickly if I had not come South so soon. The train dust and the heat retarded the healing process somewhat. The smoked glasses you sent me are fine. I wear them all the time and find they help me, especially out of doors.

Annie's physical surroundings at Tuscumbia were delightful, and most of their lessons were out of doors. Just opposite the Kellers' was President Jackson's old house, which had been deserted for many years. Teacher and pupil often sat under the superb trees, a big mulberry tree among them, which surrounded the place, or loitered in an old family burying ground hard by. The woods were enchanting, with mountain laurel, honeysuckle, heart leaves, and a thousand other fragrances. A bluff just above Muscle Shoals, which was another of their favourite spots, Mr. Anagnos called the only place in the United States which reminded him of Greece.

On May 16th Annie wrote:

We have begun to take long walks every morning, immediately after breakfast. The weather is fine, and the air is full of the scent of strawberries. Our objective point is Keller's Landing, on the Tennessee, about two miles distant. We never know how we get there, or where we are at a given moment; but that only adds to our enjoyment, especially when everything is new and strange. Indeed, I feel

as if I had never seen anything until now, Helen finds so much to ask about along the way. We chase butterflies, and sometimes catch one. Then we sit down under a tree, or in the shade of a bush, and talk about it. Afterwards, if it has survived the lesson, we let it go; but usually its life and beauty are sacrificed on the altar of learning, though in another sense it lives forever; for has it not been transformed into living thoughts? . . .

Keller's Landing was used during the war to land troops, but has long since gone to pieces, and is overgrown with moss and weeds. The solitude of the place sets one dreaming. Near the landing there is a beautiful little spring, which Helen calls "Squirrel-cup," because I told her the squirrels came there to drink. She has felt dead squirrels and rabbits and other wild animals, and is anxious to see a "walk-squirrel," which interpreted means, I think, a "live squirrel." We go home about dinner-time usually, and Helen is eager to tell her mother everything she has seen. This desire to repeat what has been told her shows a marked advance in the development of her intellect, and is an invaluable stimulus to the acquisition of language. I ask all her friends to encourage her to tell them of her doings, and to manifest as much curiosity and pleasure in her little adventures as they possibly can. This gratifies the child's love of approbation and keeps up her interest in things. This is the basis of real intercourse. She makes many mistakes, of course, twists words and phrases, puts the cart before the horse, and gets herself into hopeless tangles of nouns and verbs; but so does the hearing child. I am sure these difficulties will take care of themselves. The impulse to tell is the important thing. I supply a word here and there, sometimes a sentence, and suggest something which she has omitted or forgotten. Thus her vocabulary grows apace, and the new words germinate and bring forth new ideas; and they are the stuff out of which heaven and earth are made.

Teacher, Helen has never called her anything but "Teacher," used everything for lessons. She picked stories out of Mrs. Keller's seed catalogues and gave them to Helen. Together they set up a little store and stocked it with provisions. In this way Helen learned the names of household articles. They used real money, and Helen learned to recognize coins and make change. They went fishing with hooks and lines, and Helen ate "very small fish" which she herself had caught for supper.

The intense Southern heat made the child languid as the summer came on.

We are bothered a good deal [wrote her teacher] by people who assume the responsibility of the world when God is neglectful. They tell us that Helen is "overdoing," that her mind is too active (these very people thought she had no mind at all a few months ago!) and suggest many absurd and impossible remedies. But so far nobody seems to have thought of chloroforming her, which is, I think, the only effective way of stopping the natural exercise of her faculties. It's queer how ready people are with advice in any real or imaginary emergency, and no matter how many times experience has shown them to be wrong, they continue to set forth their opinions, as if they had received them from the Almighty!

Later in the summer the Kellers went to a cabin in the mountains about fifteen or twenty miles away from Tuscumbia. The surrounding country was wild and sparsely settled. Teacher and Helen would start out immediately after breakfast, sometimes taking luncheon with them. At first the family was uneasy, but they soon learned that Annie could always find her way back, and they were enormously gratified by the progress that Helen was making. And Annie's devotion to Helen was a matter of comment and wonder. After all, she was only twenty, an age when most girls find it extremely difficult to keep their minds riveted to one spot, especially if they are pretty and vivacious, but Annie was never so absorbed in a conversation as to forget Helen and she never missed an opportunity to teach her something. Wherever she went she took Helen, and whatever she saw she explained to Helen. When flowers were brought into the house Helen was taught to distinguish them by their forms and their odours. When they went into the yard Annie caught little pigs and held them, squealing, while Helen ran her hands over them. When the circus came to town Helen shook hands with a bear, hugged a lion cub, kept her hands on a monkey while he went through his tricks, rode an elephant, allowed a leopard to lick her hands, and was lifted up so she

could feel the ears of a giraffe. For days she talked about nothing else, and Annie hastily read everything she could find about animals so as to be able to answer her questions. Helen's questions kept her busy, not only to find the information to answer them, but also to know how wisely to impart that information, even when it was at hand. Late in August she wrote:

I do wish things would stop being born! "New puppies," "new calves," and "new babies" keep Helen's interest in the why and wherefore of things at white heat. The arrival of a new baby at Ivy Green the other day was the occasion of a fresh outburst of questions about the origin of babies and live things in general. "Where did Leila get new baby? How did doctor know where to find baby? Did Leila tell doctor to get very small new baby? Where did doctor find Guy and Prince?" [puppies] "Why is Elizabeth Evelyn's sister?" etc., etc. These questions were sometimes asked under circumstances which rendered them embarrassing, and I made up my mind that something must be done. If it was natural for Helen to ask such questions, it was my duty to answer them. It's a great mistake, I think, to put children off with falsehoods and nonsense, when their growing powers of observation and discrimination excite in them a desire to know about things. From the beginning, I have made it a practice to answer all Helen's questions to the best of my ability in a way intelligible to her and at the same time truthfully. "Why should I treat these questions differently?" I asked myself. I decided that there was no reason, except my deplorable ignorance of the great facts that underlie our physical existence. It was no doubt because of this ignorance that I rushed in where more experienced angels fear to tread. There isn't a living soul in this part of the world to whom I can go for advice in this, or indeed in any other educational difficulty. The only thing for me to do in a perplexity is to go ahead, and learn by making mistakes. But in this case I don't think I made a mistake. I took Helen and my Botany, *How Plants Grow*, up in the tree, where we often go to read and study, and I told her in simple words the story of plant-life. I reminded her of the corn, beans, and watermelon seed she had planted in the spring, and told her that the tall corn in the garden, and the beans and watermelon vines had grown from those seeds. I explained how the earth keeps the seeds warm and moist, until the little leaves are strong enough to push themselves out into the light and air where they can breathe and grow and

bloom and make more seeds, from which other baby-plants shall grow. I drew an analogy between plant and animal-life, and told her that seeds are eggs as truly as hens' eggs and birds' eggs—that the mother hen keeps her eggs warm and dry until the little chicks come out. I made her understand that all life comes from an egg. The mother bird lays her eggs in a nest and keeps them warm until the birdlings are hatched. The mother fish lays her eggs where she knows they will be moist and safe, until it is time for the little fish to come out. I told her that she could call the egg the cradle of life. Then I told her that other animals, like the dog and cow, and human beings, do not lay their eggs, but nourish their young in their own bodies. I had no difficulty in making it clear to her that if plants and animals didn't produce offspring after their kind, they would cease to exist, and everything in the world would soon die. But the function of sex I passed over as lightly as possible. I did, however, try to give her the idea that love is the great continuer of life. The subject was difficult, and my knowledge inadequate; but I am glad I didn't shirk my responsibility; for, stumbling, hesitating, and incomplete as my explanation was, it touched deep responsive chords in the soul of my little pupil, and the readiness with which she comprehended the great facts of physical life confirmed me in the opinion that the child has dormant within him, when he comes into the world, all the experiences of the race. These experiences are like photographic negatives, until language develops them and brings out the memory-images.

In October, at the urgent request of Mr. Anagnos, urgently seconded by Captain Keller, Annie wrote an account of her seven months' work for the Annual Report, but it was not in the glowing words printed there that she found her reward; rather in her feeling for Helen, and in the feeling the Kellers had for her, and in her secret knowledge that she was succeeding in what she was doing.

On June 2nd of this year, after she had been a bare three months with Helen, she wrote to Mrs. Hopkins:

I want to say something which is for your ears alone. Something within me tells me that I shall succeed beyond my dreams. Were it not for some circumstances that make such an idea highly improbable, even absurd, I should think Helen's education would surpass in

interest and wonder Dr. Howe's achievement. I know that she has remarkable powers, and I believe that I shall be able to develop and mould them. I cannot tell how I know these things. I had no idea a short time ago how to go to work; I was feeling about in the dark, but somehow I know now, and I know that I know. I cannot explain it; but when difficulties rise, I am not perplexed or doubtful. I know how to meet them; I seem to divine Helen's peculiar needs. It is wonderful. . . .

She is no ordinary child, and people's interest in her education will be no ordinary interest. Therefore let us be exceedingly careful what we say and write about her. I shall write freely to you and tell you everything, on one condition. It is this: you must promise never to show my letters to anyone. My beautiful Helen shall not be transformed into a prodigy if I can help it.

In October she wrote:

You may tell Mr. A[nagnos] that he need not fear I shall fall in love with the good doctor. I have something better to do. My work occupies my mind, heart, and body, and there is no room in them for a lover. I feel in every heartbeat that I belong to Helen, and it awes me when I think of it—this giving of one's life that another may live. God help me to make the gift worth while! It is a privilege to love and minister to such a rare spirit. It is not in the nature of man to love so entirely and dependently as Helen. She does not merely absorb what I give, she returns my love with interest, so that every touch seems a caress.

How the Kellers felt they told her at Christmas when the happy, intelligent face of the child brought keenly to memory the sad Christmases of the four preceding years. Annie had had happy Christmases at the Perkins Institution—she speaks of one of them in her letters—but the first Christmas in Tuscumbia was one of the most satisfactory experiences of her entire life.

As we came downstairs, Mrs. Keller said to me with tears in her eyes, "Miss Annie, I thank God every day of my life for sending you to us; but I never realized until this morning what a blessing you have been to us." Captain Keller took my hand but could not speak. But his silence was more eloquent than words My heart, too, was full of gratitude and solemn joy.

CHAPTER XII
Paths of Glory

LESS than five weeks after she came to Tuscumbia Annie was greatly disquieted by a

. . . stupid article about Helen [in the *Boston Herald*]. How perfectly absurd to say that Helen is "already talking fluently!" Why, one might just as well say that a two-year-old child converses fluently when he says "apple give," or "baby walk go." I suppose if you included his screaming, crowing, whimpering, grunting, squalling, with occasional kicks, in his conversation, it might be regarded as fluent—even eloquent. Then it is amusing to read of the elaborate preparation I underwent to fit me for the great task my friends entrusted to me. I am sorry that preparation didn't include spelling, it would have saved me such a lot of trouble.

In his Annual Report, published in September, 1887, Mr. Anagnos gave an extended account of the work with Helen. He reproduced a photograph of her and her teacher and, in facsimile, four of Helen's letters showing her progress up to the time of going to press. Miss Sullivan shared the honours with her pupil. Mr. Anagnos was too much of a gentleman to embarrass her by direct reference to the years in Tewksbury. "The circumstances of her early life were very inauspicious," he wrote. "She was neither rocked in a cradle lined with satin and supplied with down cushions, nor brought up on the lap of luxury. On the contrary, her experiences in childhood and youth were of a most distressing character." But, he declared, the furnace of hardships through which she had passed had freed the pure gold of her nature from all dross. He spoke of her "iron will hammered out upon the anvil of misfortune,"

of the depth, steadfastness, and beauty of her character, and of her industry, perseverance, and resolution. "And now she stands by his [Dr. Howe's] side as his worthy successor in one of the most cherished branches of his work . . . in breadth of intellect, in opulence of mental power, in fertility of resource, in originality of device and practical sagacity she stands in the front rank." His most significant remarks are these:

> She undertook the task with becoming modesty and diffidence, and accomplished it alone, quietly and unostentatiously. She had no coadjutors in it, and there will therefore be no plausible opportunity for anyone to claim a share in the origin of the architectural design of the magnificent structure because he or she was employed as helper to participate in the execution of the plan.

Later, exactly this was done, but for the moment all was well—or almost.

Mr. Anagnos seems not to have had any too clear an idea of what had happened to Helen. So far as he was concerned, she had instinctively snatched the key to the treasury of the English language from the fingers of her teacher and unlocked its doors practically by herself. "As soon as a slight crevice was opened in the outer wall of their twofold imprisonment, her mental faculties emerged full-armed from their living tomb as Pallas Athene sprang from the head of Zeus." Not having seen the unremitting efforts of the teacher nor the unflagging application of the pupil Mr. Anagnos was inclined to regard Helen's progress as a series of effortless and dazzling conquests. "It is no hyperbole," he declared, "to say that she is an intellectual phenomenon." Helen's family in Alabama and Annie Sullivan and Helen were the only ones who knew that this *was* hyperbole. Other teachers of the deaf blind said that what Helen had done was not possible and believed that the truth lay in one of two directions: either Helen was a miracle or her teacher was a liar.

It was fairly easy in those days to make the education of a

deaf blind mute appear much more extensive than it actually was. Helen at that time talked only with her fingers, and to those who did not know the manual alphabet what she said had to be interpreted. It would have been simple enough for the interpreter to embroider the pupil's language. The four letters in Helen's hand were conclusive. But the newspapers, instead of beginning at the source, began with Mr. Anagnos' eloquent account which they exaggerated until the facts, even if they were there, were hard to recognize, and the two girls found themselves, long before they left Alabama, the centre of a highly coloured legend which many people quite frankly did not believe.

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell read Mr. Anagnos' report and wrote Captain Keller that Helen's education was without parallel in the education of the deaf and said "many nice things about her teacher." The part of the report relating to Helen was reprinted in pamphlet form and in July, 1888, in Dr. Edward Everett Hale's illustrated monthly magazine, *The Wide Awake*. Earlier in the year Mr. Anagnos, on a round of visits to institutions for the blind in the Southern States, stopped by Tuscumbia to see Helen for himself and urged her mother to bring her and her teacher to Boston in June. He came away thoroughly satisfied as to Helen's genuineness, delighted with her charming ways, but with misgivings about Annie. After he reached Boston he wrote:

> I feel considerable anxiety about your overworking yourself, and I beg of you most earnestly, yes, I command you not to do more than is absolutely necessary between now and the first of June. . . . Remember that if you break down you cannot be of service either to Helen or to yourself. We want you to come to us well and sound. Now, pray give heed to this earnest, paternal admonition, for it comes directly from my heart.

He tells her that a professor in the National College for Deaf Mutes intends stopping in Tuscumbia to see her. He assures her that he shall count it a pleasure to consider her as his daugh-

ter and be of whatever help he can to her. Four days later, on the receipt of some remarkable compositions of Helen's, he warns her again not to overdo, both for her sake and Helen's. They are both working too hard. He writes to Captain Keller inviting Helen and her teacher to be the guests of the Perkins Institution for a few months in the fall. He wishes them to save the newspaper accounts of Helen.

Towards the end of May Mrs. Keller, Annie, and Helen started north in what turned out to be the first of Helen's triumphal tours. They stopped in Washington to see Dr. Bell, who asked Annie many questions concerning her methods. Annie was as embarrassed as Uncle Remus when the folklorists started after him, and said she did not have any methods. They were received by President Cleveland. "Mr. Cleveland was very glad to see me," Helen remarked naïvely. They did not see Mrs. Cleveland, but met her some years later at the home of Laurence Hutton in Princeton. On May 26th they arrived in Boston. Twelve days later the regular commencement exercises were held in Tremont Temple.

Mr. Anagnos apologized for the commencement exercises. In the first place there were no graduates, and in the second place the kindergarten could not be represented because it had been closed on account of a scarlet-fever epidemic. The first handicap most educators might deem serious, but not Mr. Anagnos. The governor of Massachusetts was present to make an address; the Rev. Stopford Brooke preached the sermon. Laura Bridgman sat, as usual, on the platform, and so, once more, did Annie Sullivan with her already famous pupil beside her. Songs were sung, music was played, and there were exercises in mental arithmetic, geography, touch reading, and clay modelling. Helen read a poem with the fingers of one hand, spelling it into the air with the other while her teacher watched the movements and read it aloud to the audience; "and so rapid were the movements of the little fingers that the three processes of reception, transmission, and expression of ideas

became almost simultaneous, and the effect to the listener was as if Miss Sullivan were reading slowly but continuously the little poem telling what the birds do." Helen joined in the clay modelling and fashioned a honey jar for her sister Mildred, and a cup and saucer for her mother.

When the exercises were over many of the guests stayed behind to watch Helen's bright animated face and to speak to her. The child had, even then, what the woman has always kept, a radiant and compelling platform appearance; men and women wept when they saw her, but the tears were not all sorrow. There was gladness in them, and thankfulness and humility. Before she was ten years old Helen had the world at her feet, and her teacher was receiving compliments from the leading educators of the deaf, and the blind and teachers of the seeing, Harvard professors among them, were saying that the story of what she had done with Helen ought to be in the hands of all teachers.

After the visit in Boston Helen and Mildred, Mrs. Keller and Annie went to Cape Cod to spend the rest of the summer with Mrs. Hopkins, and Annie discovered with a keen sense of irritation that many people who had paid no attention to her when she was an orphan staying with Mrs. Hopkins now claimed the privileges of old friends. In December they were back in Tuscumbia.

Helen by this time had numerous correspondents: Miss Mary Moore, her teacher's friend, Mr. Morrison Heady, a deaf and blind poet of Normandy, Ky., who sent her a special glove which he used to help people in talking to him, with each letter of the alphabet in a certain definite position, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, who had written claiming cousinship, and Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, who always had a special place of his own in the hearts of the child and her teacher.

In December, 1888, the *Independent* published a poem by the Wall Street broker and poet, Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, which Annie always liked better than any of the other poems

(there have been numbers of them) which were written in honour of her pupil:

Mute, sightless visitant,
From what uncharted world
Hast voyaged into Life's rude sea
With guidance scant;
As if some bark mysteriously
Should hither glide, with spars aslant
And sails all furled!

In what perpetual dawn,
Child of the spotless brow,
Hast kept thy spirit far withdrawn—
Thy birthright undefiled!
What views to thy sealed eyes appear?
What voices mayst thou hear
Speak as we know not how?
Of grief and sin hast thou,
O radiant child,
Even thou, a share? Can mortal taint
Have power on thee unfearing
The woes our sight, our hearing,
Learn from Earth's crime and plaint?

Not as we see
Earth, sky, insensate formed, ourselves,
Thou seest,—but vision-free
Thy fancy soars and delves,
Albeit no sounds to us relate
The wondrous things
Thy brave imaginings
Within their starry night create.

Pity thy unconfined
Clear spirit, whose enfranchised eyes
Use not their grosser sense?
Ah, no! Thy bright intelligence
Hath its own Paradise,

A realm wherein to hear and see
Things hidden from our kind.
Not thou, not thou—'tis we
Are deaf, are dumb, are blind!

Mr. Anagnos sent her a copy, referring to the author as one of the leading literary men in the country. He spoke regretfully of the trouble that Annie was having with her eyes and hoped she was no longer confined to her room.

Helen's education went on apace. Regular lessons were instituted. She was studying arithmetic, geography, zoölogy, botany, and reading, with a determination which equalled and sometimes surpassed that of the teacher. Once when she was puzzled by a problem her teacher suggested that she take a walk and come back to it. "My enemies would think I was running away," Helen answered. "I must stay and conquer them now." Every day she learned new words—phenomenon, comprise, energy, perpetual, mystery, and many others. She was reading Dickens' *Child's History of England*, Charles Kingsley's *Greek Heroes*, and the Bible, and showing an intense interest in God.

Her teacher's eyes were very bad, and as the months went by it became apparent that they would need expert medical attention. A substitute was hired for the summer, and Annie went North alone. This was the first time she and Helen were ever separated, and the only time of more than a few weeks' duration, except for the winter of 1916, which Annie spent in Puerto Rico. Mr. Anagnos deplored even so short a dissociation but admitted that it could not be helped.

He was making plans to go abroad and rest. About a month before his departure the Institution was saddened by the death on May 24, 1889, of Laura Bridgman. Her funeral services were held in the hall of the Institution with which her life had been identified for more than half a century. Her own pastor and Dr. Edward Everett Hale conducted the services, and many tributes were sent from all over the country, including one from Prof. Fay of the American Asylum at Hartford on behalf of the

eight thousand deaf mutes in the various institutions throughout the United States.

A year's leave of absence was granted to Mr. Anagnos, and a Mr. John Bennett was appointed acting director of the Perkins Institution during his absence. Arrangements were made at Mr. Anagnos' request for Annie and Helen to stay in Boston that winter as the guests of the Institution. In this way they had the incomparable advantages of a fine embossed library and special apparatus for the blind. And they were in Boston.

It was no small privilege of Helen's (and all Helen's privileges were sub-privileges of Annie's) that during this winter Mr. Anagnos wrote her long letters which amounted to a small encyclopædia of travel. For the little girl he invoked the ancient Romans at York, England; in Switzerland he remembered her grandfather who was born there; in Munich, "the largest and handsomest of German cities," he described the royal patronage of the kings who made it so; in Vienna he saw Queen Olga of Greece and four of her sons on their way back to Athens, where a few weeks later the oldest son was to marry the Princess Sophia, daughter of the late Emperor Frederick of Germany; he visited Budapest, "of all the cities which look at the Blue Danube the most beautiful"; Turn Severin, where he was reunited with his family and had the great pleasure of relapsing completely into Greek; Venice, Constantinople, Bucharest, Belgrade, Smyrna, Rome (where he came down with Roman fever), Naples, Dresden, and Athens, the crown of them all, "this dear old city where I spent the best years of my youth," and where in addition to the glories of the Acropolis there were many private residences "equal to the best of those which one sees in the Back Bay of Boston or on the 5th Avenue of New York."

Wherever he went he visited schools for the blind, wherever he talked, he talked of Helen; and when he was received by the Queen of Greece, he carried in his pocket his latest letter from her, the Queen, who had heard about it from an Athenian lady,

having expressed a desire to read it. It was a charming description of a daydream in the rose garden in Tuscumbia, and the Queen was touched to tears.

Meanwhile Annie was moving forward. When she was right and knew she was right, nothing could stop her. When she felt unequal to a situation, and she felt this more often than any casual observer would ever believe, she never tried to rush lightly over it, but turned for help to the person who seemed to her the best equipped in all the world to carry her through it. Helen's religion, for example. It was Mr. Anagnos' thought, as it had been Dr. Howe's with Laura Bridgman, that here was a glorious opportunity to allow a mind to "evolve the light of religious ideas from within instead of taking it from without, and form its conception of deity and divine attributes in perfect freedom from external influences and authoritative bias."

Mr. Anagnos believed (and many believed with him) that in leaving Helen alone valuable contributions might be made to psychology. The "substance of mind," the origin of religion, and the basis of ethics might all be discovered if one could watch them find birth in a mind shut off like Helen's. Helen's parents made no objection, but "unfortunately," Mr. Anagnos continues, "Miss Sullivan took a different view of the matter. She could not rise above the sway of popular notions and common prejudices."

Annie knew enough about the human mind to know that it cannot be starved into development, and Dr. Howe's experience with Laura Bridgman had taught her that it is not possible to keep a child who is in constant communication with a number of other people ignorant of the ideas those people are discussing. And she was not willing to have Helen's growth tampered with, no matter what might be proved in the process.

In 1889 an aunt of Helen's had tried to teach her about God and set the child laughing when she said that God had made her out of dust. Annie diverted her for a while by talking about Mother Nature, and this led to embarrassing questions about

Father Nature. The so-called facts of life she taught Helen simply and naturally, answering the child's questions when she asked them, but the large question of Helen's religion was something else, a question which could be answered to satisfy no one but the communicants of the particular fold into which she was led. Annie Sullivan did not consider herself a competent spiritual guide for Helen Keller or anyone else. She therefore took the child to the most celebrated minister in New England, the Rev. Phillips Brooks, and the great preacher sat with her on his knee while Annie Sullivan spelled into her hand his eloquent words about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. He had beforehand talked privately with Annie about what Helen already understood on the subject. The little girl's spiritual welfare was to him no perfunctory matter. He wrote her long letters from London in his own hand, with never a word of dogma and with the emphasis always on love. "And so Love is everything—and if anybody asks you, or if you ask yourself, what God is—answer 'God is Love.'" When he returned to the country he told her that Queen Victoria had asked about her. When he was made bishop in 1891 he wrote assuring her that he still valued her friendship, and when she wrote in July of that year that she had given her small brother his name he was greatly pleased. "It shows that you trust me as I hope you always will and that you count me your friend which I shall always be." Two years later the Bishop died.

Helen's voice was another case in point. In March, 1890, Mrs. Lamson, a former teacher of Laura Bridgman, came back from Norway with word that a deaf blind girl there, Ragnhild Kaata, had been taught to speak with her lips. It was enough for Helen. If it could be done, she too could do it. Annie knew that she could not teach her alone. She therefore made inquiries, and a few days later took Helen to Miss Sarah Fuller, principal of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf in Boston. Miss Fuller volunteered to give Helen lessons—eleven in all she gave. Miss Fuller was one of the pioneer teachers of oral speech in this

country, and the whole subject was not nearly so well understood then as it is now. She began at once with articulation when the beginning should have been with exercises to strengthen and develop the vocal cords before actually drawing them into service. Helen was able, however, at the end of the eleven lessons to pronounce haltingly the sentence "I-am-not-dumb-now," but most of what she said had to be interpreted by Miss Fuller or Miss Sullivan.

After the eleven lessons Miss Sullivan carried on the work alone. It was her aim and Helen's to have Helen talk like a normal person, and this is the only one of their many heroic undertakings in which they have confessed defeat. It is no secret that Helen's voice is the great disappointment of her life. She and her teacher have laboured with it incessantly for more than forty years, but they have never made it normal. To those who are accustomed to it, it is easy to understand and not unpleasant to hear, rather like listening to someone with a queer foreign accent. But strangers, as a rule, do not find it easy to follow.

Helen worked in complete silence. It is one thing to teach speech to a deaf child who is not blind; it is another thing to preserve the gift of speech in a child who has once talked and has lost the power to do so through deafness, even if the child has talked for only a year or two; and it is an entirely different and infinitely more difficult thing to teach speech to a child who has never talked, who cannot hear, and who has no eyes to watch the lip and throat movements. 'Many times," writes a cousin of Helen's from Alabama, "it was necessary for Helen to put her sensitive fingers in Teacher's mouth, sometimes far down in her throat, until Teacher would be nauseated, but nothing was too hard, so Helen was benefited." "It is to her," Hclen says in speaking of her teacher, "that I owe most of my progress in this, as in everything else."

In the process of learning to speak Helen learned to read the speech of others with her fingers. By placing her middle finger

on the nose, her forefinger on the lips, and her thumb on the throat, she can "hear" what another person says. This is a great convenience for those who do not know the manual alphabet and a great convenience for her also, when, for example, she is left alone in the house with a servant who does not use the finger language. This reading of lips is the least publicized of all Helen's accomplishments; it is the one Annie Sullivan taught her alone, and as a sheer bit of mechanical skill it is perhaps the most remarkable of her many remarkable attainments.

To Helen the most important result of learning to speak was that in doing so she became able to think more quickly, "three times more quickly," she says. Heretofore the had remembered words in her fingers, either as made up of the muscular movements of the manual alphabet or as the touch sensations excited by Braille points or raised letters; now a third way was added, "the old centre for speech, rendered apt for the expression of exact thought and abstract idea by thousands of years of hereditary use, was called in, she felt she had entered a new world, and . . . forthwith thought more rapidly and accurately." These words are from *The Deaf Child*, by Dr. James Kerr Love, famous aural surgeon of Glasgow, Scotland. He speaks with authority in such matters.

Physical ideas still came to Helen through touch, but she was able, after she learned speech, to translate them instantly into intellectual meanings. She thinks now in articulate processes, like anyone else, though when she makes an effort to remember she still, on occasion, uses all three methods open to her. She remembers in her fingers which repeat the movements of the fingers that have spelled the passage to her, in her fingers again when she recalls not how words *look* on a page but how they *feel* there, and in her lips, that is, in the normal speech centre.

Aside from this, her speech, imperfect as it is, has been a source of deep satisfaction to her. "Even when the speech is not beautiful," she says, "there is a fountain of joy in uttering words,

It is an emotional experience quite different from that which comes from spelled words." It has immeasurably increased her usefulness, and it has made it possible for her not only to converse with ordinary people, but with the totally deaf as well, without the intervention of a third person. And while Helen and her teacher confess to a sense of failure, others do not. "Side by side with Dr. Howe's great work [the teaching of language to the blind deaf]," says Dr. Love, "must be put Helen Keller's [the acquisition of speech by the blind deaf]—the greatest individual achievement in the whole history of oralism, or indeed of education."

If Annie had been able to devote her entire time simply to teaching Helen to speak, the results might have been more satisfying, but she and Helen both realized that to have something to say was more important than to have a beautiful way of saying it. Their other work was not neglected.

Early in 1890 Helen wrote Mr. Anagnos a letter in French. He replied in the same language and wrote Annie a letter in English congratulating her upon the child's new attainment and asking her to send him a copy of *St. Nicholas* in which a story of Helen's was to appear.

During the winter, in addition to their unremitting work, Annie and Helen were very much taken up with social engagements. Helen was probably the most distinguished celebrity in Boston that winter, and they were invited to numerous parties. Annie, like Robert Burns before her in Scotland, was sometimes thrust aside like a servant and called in only when she was needed. On one such occasion, when the party was some miles out of Boston, her feelings were so outraged (and with reason) that she snatched Helen away and boarded the train for home. They had no money, but the conductor carried them safely to their destination. At another time, when Helen was invited and she was not included, Annie refused to go (which meant that Helen could not go either). This created a tempest, for the invitation bore the name of one of the most

powerful of the old Boston Brahmins. Such incidents were infuriating, especially to those who were accustomed to having their wishes respected, and word began to filter around that a perfectly terrible person was in charge of the saintly child, and a number of older men and women began to feel calls from God to tell Helen what to do with her life. This was annoying, and it was annoying, too, to have Helen dubbed a saint. She was, as her teacher says, the most reasonable person in the world, once she had acquired language, but she was very far from being a saint, and never has enjoyed being called one.

Towards the end of their first year at the Perkins Institution an unfortunate incident occurred. On May 17, 1890, an interview with Annie was published in the Boston *Journal* during the course of which she said essentially what Mr. Anagnos had already said, namely, that Helen was not a regular pupil at the Institution, though she had the advantages of its equipment. "I have the whole charge of her," Annie told the reporter, "and my salary is paid by her father." This seems harmless enough, but Helen's anomalous position at the Institution where she was not subject to the routine discipline and where more attention was paid to her than to all the others put together had begun to vex certain of its functionaries.

It was never difficult to get what Helen needed, but it was often difficult to get equipment for the other pupils. This was not fair, as Annie Sullivan was among the first to point out, but it was a fact. Claims had been advanced in certain quarters, but never by Mr. Anagnos nor anyone else closely associated with Annie and her pupil, giving credit to the Perkins Institution for Helen's education, and when the interview appeared vials of wrath and indignation were emptied upon Annie's head. However true what she said, and however often Mr. Anagnos or anyone else might say it, she was taught in summary fashion that she must not say it. She was immediately accused of biting the hand that fed her, and it was intimated to her, according to Mr. Sanborn, though by whom he does not say,

that "Alabama would be a more fitting place than South Boston for her peculiar manifestations of gratitude."

Annie wrote a letter of apology to the trustees:

> The truth is that the advantages she [Helen Keller] has had at the Institution during the past year have done more to develop and broaden her mind than any training I could possibly have given her in years, alone. And, much as Helen is indebted to the Institution, I am much more so, for, as you know, I was educated there, and since Helen has been in my charge I have been encouraged constantly by its Director, Mr. Anagnos. And without the help of my Institution friends, the work would have seemed an impossibility to me. It was farthest from my mind to speak lightly of my obligations to my school; and I beg that though you blame me for indiscretion, you will not blame me for ingratitude.

She wrote also to Mr. Anagnos, inclosing the interview and a copy of her letter to the trustees—

> . . . in the faint hope that it will help you to judge me kindly, or at least fairly, in this matter. At any rate, it will prove to you that I did all that I could to correct the false impression given in that miserable interview.

The plan had been to have Helen articulate a few sentences from the platform during the commencement exercises, but the authorities decided that it would look as if they were assuming credit for teaching her to speak and refused to allow it. Annie shut up like a clam. This was the last time that she ever talked to a reporter for publication, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Anagnos was finally able to persuade her to write an account of Helen's last two years for the Annual Report. She had kept no day-to-day record. She had poured all of her magnificent energy into the exhausting task of teaching Helen, skimming the world with swift selective fingers and bringing Helen what she saw, reading to her, explaining to her, and picking up the little unimportant bits of human conversation that swirled around them. The spelling was not so tiring for Helen, for all she had to do was to let her hand rest upon her

teacher's, but it kept Annie at the point of exhaustion much of the time.

From Dresden in August Mr. Anagnos begged her to set down a full and authentic account of what Helen had done in the last two years. "Upon this alone I will base my observations and remarks, giving you all the credit of your work and reserving for myself only the pleasure that I am serving in the humble capacity of a chronicler." Annie was unmoved. She wrote that no one seemed to need anything more from her on the subject of Helen. Immediately Mr. Anagnos replied in the most positive manner that he still depended upon her as much as ever. "It will be almost presumptuous on my part, or on that of anyone else, to write with any degree of authority on a subject in which we are outsiders." But in October he wrote in response to another letter of hers in the greatest anxiety about her eyes and begged her not to use them until she could do so with perfect safety. "The preservation of your sight is of greater importance and of a higher consideration than anything else."

Whether Annie's eyes were really worse at this time or not it is now impossible to determine. "It would be difficult," she says, "to exaggerate the seriousness of their condition, but I must confess that I sometimes used them as an excuse for getting out of doing things that I didn't want to do." At any rate, she did finally write what Mr. Anagnos wanted.

CHAPTER XIII
Winds of Sorrow

WHEN Annie and Helen left Boston they went to Hulton, Pa., to visit a Mr. William Wade, uncle of Margaret Deland, whom they had met through one of Helen's stories about herself in *St. Nicholas*. In the course of the story she spoke of her small dog. Small dogs, in Mr. Wade's opinion, were unsuitable for blind children; they needed big ones which might be of some use to them, and to make sure that Helen had a big one he sent her an enormous mastiff which Helen called Lioness. Lioness was gentle, but she was almost as large as the animal from which she took her name, and the very sight of her made the timid tremble. She was shot to death by a policeman a few days after her arrival in Tuscumbia.

Helen wrote Mr. Wade an affecting letter—"I am sure they never could have done it, if they had only known what a dear good dog Lioness was"—which he published in *Forest and Stream*. A deluge followed. It seemed as if everyone in the world wanted to give Helen a dog. A gentleman in Quebec started a subscription to buy one, and a gentleman in London asked the privilege of making up the deficit if there was a deficit or of supplying the entire amount if no subscriptions were forthcoming. But before anyone else could act Mr. Wade himself bought her another mastiff, and Helen diverted the subscriptions to the use of a little deaf and blind boy, Tommy Stringer, who had been discovered in an almshouse in Allegheny, Pa.

When the two girls went South the new dog went with them. He, too, was a big animal, and, in the midst of his new surroundings, hard to manage. Nearly everybody was afraid of him

except Annie and Helen, and it was Annie who went down late one evening when he was keeping the town awake to see if she could quiet him. The dog, already distracted and not understanding her intention, bit her on the hand. Captain Keller shot him—a mastiff's was indeed a dog's life in Tuscumbia in those days. And everybody, including the local doctor, was thoroughly frightened about Annie.

Hydrophobia for about six years had been receiving more than its usual share of attention in the press, for the Pasteur treatment had been discovered, and news of it had travelled around the world. The serum had not reached Alabama—had not even reached Boston, so Mr. Anagnos wrote—but there was a Pasteur Institute in New York City, and Mr. Anagnos insisted that Annie make all haste to go there and stay as long as necessary. A Mr. Timayenis, a Greek, a friend of his, would look after her.

The Pasteur Institute was in charge of a Frenchman, Dr. Gibier, who spoke no English. Neither Annie nor the Tuscumbia doctor whom Captain Keller sent with her spoke French; nor could the good country doctor understand Dr. Gibier's Latin. Finally a servant made her understand in broken English that the doctor wanted her to take off her clothes. Annie assured him in very unbroken English that she had no intention of doing so. The wound was on her hand. She was eventually prevailed upon to remove everything but a little gauze vest (women of more than thirty will remember the garment) which the doctor took firmly between his two hands and skinned over her head before she had time to protest.

In the absence of a better place to put her, arrangements were made to have her stay in Dr. Gibier's apartments with him and his assistants. The apartments were in the same building that held the laboratory which was filled with the dogs and cats and mice and guinea pigs which they were using for experimental purposes. Here a new life began to open up for Annie Sullivan. She learned that there were other countries besides

the United States, so lately and so foolishly divided into a North and South. There was France with its charming manners, its pretty clothes, and its delightful cuisine. She was away from Helen and was treated (it was something of a novelty) as a personality all her own. A woman who was a friend of Dr. Gibier's dressed her in shimmering garments such as she had never worn before. She learned to make mayonnaise and to mix salad in a bowl. Through Dr. Gibier's work she learned that misery such as she had known in Tewksbury might not be the will of God, as those in the almshouse had taught her. Much of it was man-made, and men like Dr. Gibier were trying to put an end to it. Dr. Gibier was the personal physician of Sarah Bernhardt, and the divine Sarah was playing in New York. They went one night to see her, and afterwards were invited behind the scenes, where Annie's unaffected worship shone out so rapturously that the lovely actress kissed her on both cheeks. Sarah had dinner with Dr. Gibier a few nights later, but Annie remembers only that she spent the evening in a transport of adoration.

Her chief worry during this, her first visit to New York, was, as she wrote Mr. Anagnos, the trouble she was giving her friends, a trouble which he lightly brushed aside, "very happy to be of service to her in an hour of need." Only once was Dr. Gibier alarmed about her. One day, after reading too long, she developed, as always after an intense strain on her eyes, fever and nausea. Dr. Gibier, sure that hydrophobia had set in, sent for Mr. Timayenis, and Annie, all unworried, explained to them, amid spasms of affection from the Greek gentleman, that it was her eyes, and not her hand, that were causing the trouble. Before she left New York Mr. Anagnos asked her to have Dr. Gibier send him the bill.

She was still uncertain as to how she and Helen would spend the winter. They had not in any event planned to go back to the Perkins Institution. Annie felt that while Helen might be welcome she would not. Mr. Anagnos felt otherwise, and cer-

tainly he would have welcomed her, but a new element had entered. Captain Keller's financial condition was no longer such as to make excursions into the North possible. Mr. Anagnos begged her not to worry:

> Pray do not have the least anxiety about the future. Be Captain Keller's circumstances what they may, Helen and you will not be allowed to suffer. I must confess that I never knew you to be as sane as you seem to be now, and it would be a great pity to allow any worry to disturb such a satisfactory state of mind.

Mr. Anagnos was at work on his report for the Perkins Institution and felt that the time had come to take up the thread of Helen's story where he dropped it before he went abroad. In this report he outdid himself. One hundred and forty-six pages were given over to Helen. He spoke of her intelligent and devoted teacher but said that "Helen's mind seems almost to have created itself, springing up under every disadvantage, and working its solitary but resistless way through a thousand obstacles." She is a *marvel*, an intellectual prodigy, in every sense a remarkable person, "the finest illustration of concentrated, unselfish, whole-souled devotion that childhood has ever offered to the vision of men or that of the gods," her life is "as perfect as a poem, as pure and sweet as a strain of music." "She is the queen of precocious and brilliant children, Emersonian in temper, most exquisitely organized, with intellectual sight of unsurpassed sharpness and infinite reach, a true daughter of Mnemosyne." She is like Wordsworth, like Keats, like Galen, like Aristotle—"Reason is her sun." As for her speech, "verily her articulation is well-nigh perfect. She unloosed her tongue . . . and angels 'forgot their hymns to hear her speak.'" As for her writings, they "sparkle with perfect crystallizations of fancy's blossoms, which are sometimes huddled in clusters upon the blazing page." There was infinitely more in the same exalted strain, and included in the report, along with numerous other examples of Helen's work, was a story which she had

mailed to him some ten days or so before her teacher was bitten by the dog. Helen sent it to Mr. Anagnos for a birthday present. As with most children, Helen had often been required to retell in her own words stories she had read, but "The Frost King" she offered as original. She had written it in Alabama, inspired by the beauty of the Tuscumbia woods in October. "The story," says Mr. Anagnos, "gives tangible proof of Helen's extraordinary imagination, as well as of the originality of her thoughts and ideas, the vividness of her descriptions, the elegance of her style, and the tenderness of her feelings." But alas for Mr. Anagnos, and alas for Helen! The story was not Helen's.

It was written by a Miss Margaret Canby and published in 1873 in a little volume called *Birdie and His Fairy Friends*. Annie had never heard of it. Mrs. Keller had never heard of it. Nor had Captain Keller nor any of the other relatives in Alabama. A thorough search of the Perkins library failed to reveal a copy. It was not in raised print. Where, then, had Helen seen it? The resemblance between the two stories was so great as not to admit for a moment Helen's own statement that she had never seen it. Dr. Bell, who was in Boston on account of litigation connected with the telephone, joined in the search, but they did not, after all, have far to go. It was discovered that Mrs. Hopkins' daughter had owned the volume, and it was surmised that Mrs. Hopkins had read Helen the story in the summer of 1888 when Annie was away having her eyes treated. When Annie came back she brought with her a copy of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, and in the excitement of reading it Helen apparently forgot all about Miss Canby's story until the Alabama autumn brought it back to her as her own.

Mr. Anagnos called an investigating committee consisting of four blind persons and four with sight. Helen was summoned and questioned. Annie was asked to leave the room. Helen insisted that the story had never been read to her. Some of her testimony was "very damaging." She was charged with

plagiarism and deliberate falsehood, and at the end of the investigation the committee was divided, four for conviction, four for acquittal. Mr. Anagnos threw his vote in favour of Helen, and the verdict rested. Scarcely anyone held Helen responsible; it was the perfidious teacher who had warped the child.

Miss Canby, the author of the original story, was not in the least disturbed. She was herself a writer and understood very well what had happened to Helen. She was delighted that Helen had enjoyed the story and thought it remarkable that a child who had heard it only once and in such a way that no one could ever allude to it or refresh her mind about it could "have been able to reproduce it so vividly, even adding some touches of her own in perfect keeping with the rest, which really improve the original."

We all do what Helen did [Dr. Bell said]. Our most original compositions are composed exclusively of expressions derived from others. The fact that the language presented to Helen was in the early days so largely taken from books has enabled us in many cases to trace the origin of her expressions but they are none the less original with her for all that. We do the very same thing. Our forms of expression are copies—*verbatim et literatum*—in our earlier years, from the expressions of others which we have heard in childhood.

Mark Twain was outraged when he read of the whole incident some years later in Helen's story of her life.

Oh, dear me, how unspeakably funny and owlishly idiotic and grotesque was that "plagiarism" farce! As if there was much of anything in any human utterance, oral or written, *except* plagiarism! The kernel, the soul—let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of *all* human utterances—is plagiarism. For substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources, and daily used by the garnerer with a pride and satisfaction born of the superstition that he originated them: whereas there is not a rag of originality about them anywhere except the little discoloration they get from

his mental and moral calibre and his temperament, which is revealed in characteristics of phrasing. . . . It takes a thousand men to invent a telegraph, or a steam engine, or a phonograph, or a photograph, or a telephone, or any other important thing—and the last man gets the credit and we forget the others. He added his little *mite*—that is all he did. These object lessons should teach us that ninety-nine parts of all things that proceed from the intellect are plagiarisms, pure and simple; and the lesson ought to make us modest. But nothing can do that. . . .

In 1886 I read Dr. Holmes's poems, in the Sandwich Islands. A year and a half later I stole his dedication, without knowing it, and used it to dedicate my *Innocents Abroad* with. Ten years afterward I was talking with Dr. Holmes about it. He was not an ignorant ass—no, not he; he was not a collection of decayed human turnips, like your "Plagiarism Court," and so when I said, "I know now where I stole it, but who did *you* steal it from?" he said, "I don't remember; I only know I stole it from somebody, because I have never originated anything altogether myself, nor met anybody who had."

To think of those solemn donkeys breaking a little child's heart with their ignorant damned[1] rubbish about plagiarism! I couldn't sleep for blaspheming about it last night. . . .

They did not have this comforting letter at the time, and the outlook was dark indeed. Helen was listless and sad, and Annie was afraid—afraid because of the child's depression, and afraid that the same thing might happen again; she had no way of preventing it or even of knowing it until it was too late. She did know, however, that Helen was honest and capable, and she set herself to the difficult task of winning the child back from her sorrow.

In his Annual Report for that year Mr. Anagnos continued to speak of Helen lovingly and enthusiastically. She and Annie were present at the reception given at the kindergarten on Froebel's birthday. Their little protégé, Tommy Stringer, was also there, and they had invited a number of their friends to

[1]This word is scratched out. To the end of the letter is appended the following note: Edited & modified by Clara Clemens, deputy to her mother, who for more than 7 months has been ill in bed & unable to exercise her official function.

meet him—Bishop Brooks, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edward Everett Hale, Dr. Bell, and Mr. Hitz. Helen spoke in Tommy's behalf—"with unsurpassed fluency and fervour," wrote Mr. Anagnos, "and her listeners were entranced and moved to tears. . . . It is hardly possible to describe adequately the tremendous effect of Helen's appeal. It was as though some wizard of the olden time had cast his spell over the assembly."

In May Annie and Helen sponsored a tea for the kindergarten in the handsome residence on Beacon Street of Mrs. Mahlon Spaulding. "Helen has seldom appeared to better advantage than on this occasion," Mr. Anagnos wrote. The home in which the tea was held belonged to the sister-in-law of one of the best friends Annie and Helen ever had, Mr. John Spaulding, the "Sugar King" of Boston, known to his friends as King John. He was one of the first men in the city to give a share in his business to his employees, and the conservative at the time thought him no better than the anarchists who were trying to spoil the workers with an eight-hour day. He was a generous and unselfish friend to Annie and her pupil, furnishing them lavishly with money when they stood in need of it. Many of the advantages which they enjoyed a few years later would have been denied them if it had not been for his aid.

Helen sent *The Frost King* to Mr. Anagnos in November, 1891. In May of the following year her teacher was honoured with an invitation to be a guest of the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, of which Dr. Bell was president. In June she was elected a member of the association.

In spite of her manifold difficulties, appreciation of her had not been lacking. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1890 wrote Helen that her progress did great credit to her instructors as well as to herself, and Whittier wrote, "God has been good to thee in giving thee such a teacher as Miss Sullivan." But most people were willing to accept Helen as a miracle and let it go at that. Only one was more interested in *how* Helen had been

taught than in what she had been taught, and that one was Dr. Alexander Graham Bell.

In *The Silent Educator* for June, 1892, he said:

> The great problem that confronts us in this country is, how to impart to the deaf a knowledge of idiomatic English. It must be admitted by all who have come into contact with Helen Keller that this problem has been solved in the case of at least one deaf child, not yet twelve years of age; and I therefore agree with the opinion expressed in the May number of *The Silent Educator*, that teachers of the deaf should study very carefully the method of instruction pursued in the case of Helen Keller. The difficulty of the problem must have been enormously increased, in her case, by the fact that she had been totally blind, as well as deaf, from infancy. On the other hand, her unusual intellectual abilities have been of undoubted advantage.
>
> We must not run away with the idea, however, that exceptional intellectual powers could alone account for the phenomenon. No mind, however richly endowed, could possibly arrive intuitively at a knowledge of idiomatic English expressions. It is absolutely certain that such expressions must have been taught to her before she could use them. It is, then, a question of instruction we have to consider, and not a case of supernatural acquirement. Among the thousands of children in our schools for the deaf who are not hampered by the additional handicap of blindness, there are some who are intellectually as capable of mastering the intricacies of the English language as Helen herself.

Annie's plan of using the finger language exactly like spoken language he considered very important; also her plan of giving Helen books to pore over before she could understand what was in them. Idiom was presented to her as to a normal child who here and there picks out words and sentences that he understands and later learns to put them together himself. All language is acquired by imitation, but hearing children are already familiar with language before they begin to imitate it. Deaf children who acquire idiomatic English (there are many who do not) follow exactly the same plan. The only way to give them colloquial idiomatic English is to present it to them endlessly through the sense of touch, as in Helen's case, or

through the sense of sight, as in the case of children who are deaf but not blind.

Few appreciate the miracle of language so much as those who have worked with the deaf, and few, even among those, have ever loved language as intensely as Dr. Bell and Annie Sullivan loved it. Dr. Bell's voice was in itself a thing of beauty.

The best thing Bell did for me—spiritually [says Dr. Thomas Watson, his assistant in the development of the telephone]—was to emphasize my love for the music of the speaking voice. He was himself a master of expressive speech. The tones of his voice seemed vividly to colour his words. His clear, crisp articulation made other men's speech seem uncouth.

Annie says:

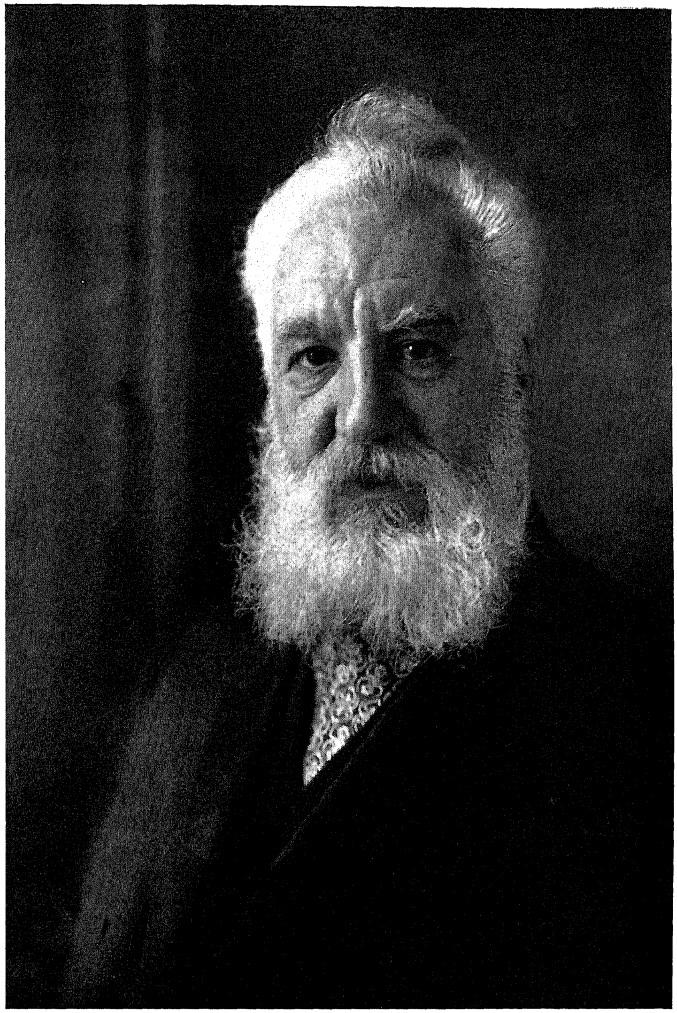
It was an immense advantage for one of my temper, impatience, and antagonisms to know Dr. Bell intimately over a long period of time. In a very real sense he was the prophet of my destiny. Gifted with a voice that itself suggested genius, he spoke the English language with a purity and charm which have never been surpassed by anyone I have heard speak. I listened to every word fascinated.

And again:

What a marvellous thing is language! How seldom we give it a thought! Yet it is one of the most amazing facts in life. By means of the spoken or written word thought leaps over the barrier that separates mind from mind, yet this miracle excites no comment. With simple little words we open our hearts to each other. To think and speak, to have ideas and write them, to make plain to others, to talk with strangers, to learn from acquaintances and the newspapers what our contemporaries are doing, to continue to communicate with the dead through the printed word, to keep their memories alive—surely this is the marvel of existence.

It was Dr. Bell who, more than any other, released Annie from her sense of inferiority.

I never felt at ease with anyone until I met him [she says]. I was extremely conscious of my crudeness, and because I felt this inferior-



Harris and Ewing

Alexander Graham Bell

Photo from Brown Brothers

ANNIE SULLIVAN AND HELEN KELLER at Niagara Falls (*oval*); HELEN KELLER; HELEN KELLER AND ANNIE SULLIVAN, 1887.

ity, I carried a chip on my shoulder that somebody was forever trying to snap off. I never forgot what my cousin Anastatia said once to a caller, "She has had no bringing up. A colt or a heifer in the pasture has better manners." Dr. Bell had a happy way of making people feel pleased with themselves. He had a remarkable faculty of bringing out the best that was in them. After a conversation with him I felt released, important, communicative. All the pent-up resentment within me went out in the genial atmosphere he spread about him.

I learned more from him than from anyone else. He imparted knowledge with a beautiful courtesy that made one proud to sit at his feet and learn. He answered every question in the cool, clear light of reason. In his utterance there was no trace of animus against individuals, nations, or classes. If he wished to criticize me, and he often did, he began by pointing out something good I had done in another direction. When I bewailed my mockery of an education he soothed me: "You were at least not hampered by preconceived notions of how to proceed with your little pupil and I think that an advantage. You did not take to your task standardized ideas, and your own individuality was so ingrained that you did not try to repress Helen's. Being a minority of one is hard but stimulating. You must not lay so much stress on what you were not taught by others. What we learn from others is of less value than what we teach ourselves."

Ignorant praise of her work, however amiable the intention behind it, has never given Annie Sullivan any pleasure, but Dr. Bell had spent a good part of his life studying the very problems she had set herself to solve, and whatever he said was treasured. When she is asked to-day what, aside from her deep love for Helen, has made it possible for her to stick to her exacting and tedious task for so many years, she says, "I think it must have been Dr. Bell—his faith in me."

Closely associated with Dr. Bell in his work for the deaf was his secretary, an old gentleman in the grand manner, Mr. John Hitz, who wore a long white beard and a flowing cape like an actor's. Mr. Anagnos always referred to him as "the picturesque secretary." He was born in Davos, Switzerland, and after selling pianos and teaching school in various parts of the United

States, finally succeeded his father here as consul-general from his native country in 1864. He later entered the banking business in Washington, but its complications were too much for his unworldly soul, and it was not long before he found himself in serious difficulties from which he was extricated by his good friend Clara Barton, whom Helen and her teacher used to visit in Washington, and about whom their most vivid recollection is that her cook made excellent biscuits.

Mr. Hitz assumed a sort of spiritual guardianship over Annie and her pupil teacher, calling Helen his *Tochter*. Helen called him her *Pflegvater*, and Annie called him *mon père*. It was Mr. Hitz who took Annie incognita to Feeding Hills to learn about her family, and it was Mr. Hitz who led Helen down a path along which her teacher was never able to follow, for it was Mr. Hitz who introduced her to the religion of Swedenborg. Mr. Hitz was head of the Volta Bureau for the increase and diffusion of knowledge relating to the deaf which was founded and endowed by Dr. Bell in 1887 at Washington, D.C., with the Volta prize money given him for the invention of the telephone. In 1892, under his direction, the bureau issued a beautifully bound and printed *Helen Keller Souvenir* giving a complete account of Helen's education. In the first place it was thought that the story would be of benefit to other teachers of the deaf and in the second place it was hoped that the "Frost King" episode could be cleared up. Miss Canby's story was printed in full, and so was Helen's. Helen's statement about it was included, and Annie Sullivan's, and a poem of Miss Canby's dedicated to Helen.

When matters were settled in Boston, Annie and her pupil went back to Alabama for the summer followed by a report widely circulated in the newspapers that Helen was a physical wreck. This report Helen hastened to correct when it came to her attention, but her slightly nervous manner led many people during the years she was getting her education into the same belief. From time to time similar reports sprang up, and as

often as they came Helen denied them. She was wonderfully strong and healthy, but so dispirited that summer of 1892 that Annie abandoned the idea of regular lessons and tried to entertain her in less strenuous ways. From the tension in her own soul she sought freedom in wild and dangerous horseback rides through the woods. Helen was restive, but both of them drew courage from the strong support of Dr. Bell, and after a few months Helen sat down and wrote a brief account of her life for the *Youth's Companion*. With this, the unhappy incident came to an end, at least in its major aspects.

Helen resumed her lessons in the winter, but both she and her teacher were restless. There was no special aim to the work, no definite end in view. And there was no money. Annie's salary had long since stopped and was never again resumed. In the summer of 1893 she and Helen attended the second Cleveland inauguration and visited the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago with Dr. Bell. After this they went once more to Hulton, Pa., to stay with Mr. William Wade. Annie felt that it was time for Helen to begin on the classics, and knowing that her own equipment was not equal to teaching her, she secured the services of a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Dr. John D. Irons, who was noted for his proficiency in Latin and Greek. Annie spelled his instructions to Helen, and he was much impressed with the child's ability. Afterwards, when he was complimented upon his work with her, he said, "He would be a sad botcher who could not make a good job of such material."

At the meeting of the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, held at Chautauqua, N. Y., Annie delivered a speech on the instruction of Helen Keller. "Delivered" is hardly the right word, for at the last moment shyness overcame her, and she asked Dr. Bell to read it for her. In it she made an effort, practically in vain, to stem the tide of exaggeration which threatened to engulf her and her pupil. The excerpts given below are not those relating to her method with Helen, but to her attitude towards Helen, which has,

fortunately, always been critical, and, in spite of her nearness to the subject, somewhat detached.

Much has been said and written about Helen Keller, too much, I think, has appeared in type. One can scarcely take up a newspaper or a magazine without finding a more or less exaggerated account of her so-called "marvellous accomplishments," which I believe consist only in her being able to speak and write the language of her country with greater ease and fluency than the average seeing and hearing child of her age. People are surprised that a child, handicapped by the loss of the senses of sight and hearing, has thus far succeeded in overcoming the obstacles which seemed to stand in the way of her intellectual development; they marvel greatly that her progress in acquiring knowledge compares favourably with that of more fortunate children, and do not seem to understand that such things are possible. Helen's case, because of the peculiar circumstances which attend it, appeals to our sense of wonder, and, as this is one of the deep-rooted instincts of human nature, such appeals are seldom in vain; they command the attention even of those who would fain deny the possibility of the achievements which have been claimed for my pupil. It is easier for the credulous to say, "She is a miracle, and her teacher is another miracle," and for the unbelievers to declare, "Such things cannot be; we are being imposed upon," than to make a conscientious study of the principles involved in her education. I, therefore, ask you to free your minds from pre-conceived notions and theories regarding this case, and give it the thought and study which it deserves, with a view to satisfy yourselves whether the same, or similar, results may be obtained when children are so fortunate as to have eyes and ears with which to see and hear; or whether rapidity and ease and delight in education like dear Helen's are only possible where children are deprived of two senses. . . .

I shall have cause for gratification if I succeed in convincing you that Helen Keller is neither a "phenomenal child," "an intellectual prodigy," nor an "extraordinary genius," but simply a very bright and lovely child unmarred by self-consciousness or any taint of evil. Every thought mirrored on her beautiful face, beaming with intelligence and affection, is a fresh joy, and this workaday world seems fairer and brighter because she is in it. And while it is unsafe to predict what Helen's future will be, I know she is destined to be the instrument of great good in the world, not only by drawing forth the sympathies, and putting into exercise the kind emotions of others,

but by teaching them how great things may be achieved under the worst difficulties, and how pure and sweet and joyous may be existence under the darkest cloud. . . .

It is Helen's loving and sympathetic heart rather than her bright intellect which endears her to everybody with whom she comes in contact. She impresses me every day as being the happiest child in the world, and so it is a special privilege to be with her. The spirit of love and joyousness seems never to leave her. May it ever be so. It is beautiful to think of a nature so gentle, pure, and loving as hers; it is pleasant also to think she will ever see only the best side of every human being. While near her, the roughest man is all gentleness, all pity; not for the world would he have her know that he is aught but good and kind to everyone. So we see, pathetic as Helen's life must always seem to those who enjoy the blessings of sight and hearing, that it is yet full of brightness and cheer and courage and hope.

It was at this meeting that Annie and Helen met Mr. John D. Wright who, with Dr. Thomas Humason, was planning to open a school in New York City for the purpose of teaching oral language to the deaf, and it was decided that Helen should attend the school. The two men had heard Helen speak and felt that with the new methods her voice might be made into a voice like other people's. In this hope she and her teacher came to New York in the winter of 1894.

CHAPTER XIV

Daring Plans

About a month after the term opened Annie wrote Mr. Hitz, "My time is wholly occupied. I like the work in a way, but I feel restive under the school routine. You may say what you will. I was never meant for a schoolma'am." She worked harmoniously with the other teachers, and it is to Mr. John D. Wright, who was closely associated with her during the two years that she spent in the school, that I am indebted for the following very accurate description of her mental processes:

She has a really fine mind, a keen perception of essentials, a brilliant capacity for selecting them and teaching them to Helen; an instinct for seizing a passing opportunity and making the most of a situation. She often shows uncanny insight into the springs of human action, and takes frequent advantage of this power.

I found her invariably and meticulously honest in her mental processes, and scrupulously trustworthy in all her dealings with people. She had, and still has, a strong abhorrence of anything bordering on the false and untrue. She always resisted with her entire force any attempt to create false impressions about Helen. She knew that Helen was quite remarkable enough just as she was, and there was no need for unfounded enhancement of her powers in the public mind.

She can become eagerly enthused, and under the influence of that enthusiasm will work very hard—for a while—but the mechanism requires periods of rest to recover its resilience. She is not a plodder. When she moves she moves fast. When she stops she remains very still. I think her greatest handicap all through her life has been lack of self-confidence, but she has the courage of her convictions, and has never been afraid to "take a chance." She is more apt to believe in others than [in] herself.

Helen's articulation improved, but she and her teacher had not been long in New York before they saw that the special object for which they had come could not be attained. Helen's voice could not be made normal. But the school was a good one, and they continued the work. Through Dr. Humason, a fine musician, Annie's gift for music was discovered, a gift she never found time to develop, but she went with Dr. Humason to the Wagnerian operas, which she loved not only because they were music but because they were poetry as well.

Socially speaking this was the golden day of their lives. At the homes of Laurence Hutton, Mary Mapes Dodge, and Richard Watson Gilder (editor of the *Century Magazine*), she and Helen met everybody—John D. Rockefeller, H. H. Rogers, William Dean Howells, Charles Dudley Warner, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Hamilton Wright Mabie, Henry Alden, John La Farge, Henry van Dyke, Woodrow Wilson, Bishops Brent and Greer, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Ellen Terry and Henry Irving, Joseph Jefferson, and Mark Twain. One of their closest friends was Miss Nina Rhoades, the blind daughter of Mr. John Harsen Rhoades, president of the Greenwich Savings Bank.

Annie bore herself gracefully and modestly, so friends have testified who knew her at this time; and among those who came to see Helen were a few who recognized her worth. Mark Twain was one. Ellen Terry was another. She kissed her and said, "I do not know whether I am glad to see you or not; for I feel so ashamed of myself when I think of how much you have done for the little girl."

The decade which closed the century was a very trying one for the Irish, and whatever the Irish did Annie had to suffer for. From a name like Sullivan there was no escape. A few years before she came to New York her Bonnie Prince, Charles Stewart Parnell, after one of the most notorious scandals in history, had married Mrs. Katherine O'Shea. Parnell was dead now, and so was John Boyle O'Reilly. Tammany Hall was patiently submitting to one of its perennial investigations, and

the Irish cause as a political issue seemed lost. But the Irish immigrants, those famine refugees, were rising in the world. Those who had prospered sufficiently to warrant it had decked their wives with jewels and were presenting them at the doors of society, where they were received with raucous and unlovely laughter. Mark Twain in *The Gilded Age* made fun of those who changed their names to something French to hide their origin. Those who were still Sullivans were reminded that John L. was the greatest of their tribe. Annie was often asked, and not always facetiously, if she was a relative. "Sensitive Irish-Americans in 1894 suffered considerably," says Mr. Thomas Beer, who in *The Mauve Decade* has made a vivid study of the period, "and their recollections of the year were very sour indeed."

But, slipping in on the wedge that Helen made, Annie Sullivan was on the whole very kindly received. She was dreadfully afraid that somebody might find out who she was, and it was a comfort to reflect that whatever might be picked out of her own drab past her pupil was still an Adams. Nothing could change that.

She watched the glittering parade go by against a sombre background—the background of Tewksbury, which gave a deeper blackness than Helen had ever known. She never talked to Helen about Tewksbury. With all her heart she tried to forget the place and what she had learned there, but wherever she looked the picture of the almshouse inserted itself like a shadow.

The world had changed since she left there, had even changed since she left Perkins. It was a time of deep political significance, and all her life Annie, no matter what the condition of her eyes might be, has kept up with politics. In 1892 the Homestead strike took place near Pittsburgh, and Alexander Berkman, a lover of Emma Goldman, shot Henry Clay Frick. The year of the great World's Fair in Chicago (1893) the Queen of Hawaii was deposed, and the following year an American was made president of the islands. The year after that, in the midst of unemployment and suffering all over the country, Coxey and his

ragged army marched to Washington, and nervous capitalists thought the social revolution had come. There were railroad strikes, and in 1895 the Pullman strike in Chicago engineered by Eugene Debs, which introduced a new note into the relationship between capital and labour—"government by injunction." Henry George had become a major prophet, and the whole country had gone wild over a little book, *Looking Backward*, by one Edward Bellamy who was born at Chicopee, Mass., not far from Feeding Hills. The book was a picture of Utopia illustrating a new order of society. Bellamy stumped the country with his message. Bellamy clubs were formed, and, as Mr. William Dean Howells said, "the solution of the riddle of the painful earth through the dreams of Henry George, through the dreams of Edward Bellamy, through the dreams of all the generous visionaries of the past, seemed not impossibly far off." Mr. Howells might have added Tolstoi, for the great Russian, his conversion achieved and his confessions written, had gone over to the simple peasant life and was beckoning the rest of the world to follow.

America had something else on her mind. Stretching her young limbs in the sun and finding them strong she waked to a feeling which she called solicitude. The more cynical called it ambition. At any rate, without quite meaning it or quite knowing how it happened, she found herself towards the end of the century with a war on her hands, and when the war was over her hands were still clinging to some stray bits of land she had picked up.

Annie and her pupil followed these developments—their interest in them is shown in Helen's letters—but their most important problem was still to piece together the pattern of their own lives. Before the first year was over Annie was considering another school, but her spirit quailed before it.

Sometimes [she wrote Mr. Hitz] it seems to me as if I could not endure the thought of going to another school, and at such times it

seems as if I had better let another person more capable of continuing Helen's education take my place; there is

So much to do that is not yet begun,
So much to hope for that one cannot see,
So much to win, so many things to be.

It was at this period that she began for the first time to formulate her theories of education. From an undated letter to Mr. Hitz written while she was at the Wright-Humason School:

Thank Heaven, I didn't have to follow a curriculum when I began teaching Helen. I am convinced she wouldn't have learned language as easily as she did. It seems to me it is made as difficult as possible in school for a child to learn anything.

Helen learned language almost as unconsciously as the normal child. Here it is made a "lesson." The child sits indoors, and for an hour the teacher tries more or less skilfully to engrave words upon his brain. As I look back, it seems as if Helen was always on the jump when I was teaching her. We were generally in the open air doing something. Words were learned as they were needed. She rarely forgot a word that was given to her when the action called it forth, and she learned a phrase or even a sentence as readily as a single word when it was needed to describe the action.

Apparently, children learn language more quickly when they are free to move about among objects that interest them. They absorb words and knowledge simultaneously. In the classroom they cease to be actors in the drama, they sit and watch the teacher doing something with her mouth which does not excite their curiosity particularly. Passivity does not stimulate interest or mental energy. The child learns eagerly what he wants to know and indifferently what you want him to know.

I have thought much about methods of teaching since I came here. The contrast between these children's plodding pursuit of knowledge and Helen's bounding joyousness makes me wonder. When I go into one of the classrooms and see little children sitting demurely behind their small desks, while a teacher sits in front of them, holding up an object in her hand for their inspection, then slowly speaking the name of the object which they vainly try to imitate, I feel somehow as if they were chained to their seats and forced to gaze intently at a giantess who made faces at them.

I very seldom speak of what is in my mind. I do not think teachers are at all open-minded. To say that they do not welcome ideas which imply criticism of their methods is to put it mildly. I do not know if all teachers close their minds to the stupidities they practise. I have known only teachers of the blind and the deaf, and I pity them more than I blame them. When you consider the huge doses of knowledge which they are expected to pour into the brains of their small pupils, you cannot demand of them initiative or originality. The pressure upon them is so great they find it necessary to resort to forcing methods. There follows the intensive cultivation of the memory. The little brains are crammed with knowledge to the point of indigestion. They learn a little of everything, and by a super-effort retain it until examinations and tests are over when they straight away forget it, not having learned any use for their too vast learning.

There isn't a doubt in my mind that schools force upon the young an abnormal life. The hours are too long, too many subjects are taught, too complicated methods are employed. The teacher has no time to give to the individual needs of the children.

I wish you would let Dr. Bell read this letter. If he thinks I am right, perhaps he could use his great influence at the coming convention to impress upon instructors of the deaf that what their pupils need is more out-of-door lessons—lessons about living things—trees and flowers and animals—things they love and are curious about. The number of subjects taught is not so important as that the children should learn language for the joy of it. The miracle of education is achieved when this happens.

Mr. Hitz returned a copy of the letter to Annie with the following note attached:

Dr. Bell is so delighted with your criticism of educational methods in the schools for the deaf that he is very desirous for you to prepare a paper (it need not be long) for the Convention on the subject. I am sure you have not kept a copy of the letter; so I am mailing a copy to you.

Various efforts were made to tempt Annie away from Helen. Financially the offers were far more attractive than teaching Helen had ever been, but she was determined to see Helen through. The girl had shone among the deaf as she had among

the blind, and the daring idea came that she might be able to hold her own with the seeing as well.

Helen had once announced that she was going to Harvard. That, manifestly, was impossible, but Radcliffe might not be. A longer and more arduous road than any they had yet climbed lay ahead, for, aside from the mechanical difficulties, which were as great as they had ever been, Helen's education had not been conducted with college examinations in mind, and there were many gaps to be filled. In all of the schools she had attended up to the present, concessions were made to the afflictions of the pupils. At Radcliffe she would have to keep pace with girls who could see and hear, and whose speech the instructors could understand without effort. No allowances would be made for her; she must keep up with the swift-footed or fail completely; and failure would be more ignominious than never trying. But the daring idea persisted—Helen as eager as her teacher—and Annie began to investigate preparatory schools. On the recommendation of Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, president emeritus of Radcliffe, she approached Mr. Arthur Gilman, head of the Cambridge School for Young Ladies.

She and Helen were again without funds. The splendid days in New York had been made possible by Mr. Spaulding, but Mr. Spaulding was dead. Giving money, however, was the one thing their friends could do to help them along, and Mrs. Eleanor Hutton, wife of Laurence Hutton ("Aunt Eleanor"), undertook to raise a fund to make the continuation of Helen's education possible. Bishop Greer, William Dean Howells, and Charles Dudley Warner were among the members of her committee. Dr. Bell, Mr. H. H. Rogers, and a number of others contributed to the fund which they hoped would grow large enough to support Helen and her "essential companion, Miss Sullivan," throughout their lives. For nearly ten years Annie and Helen had lived for the most part on the capricious bounty of the wealthy. It was a precarious existence, and those who were interested in them wished to bring it to an end. They also

hoped that the possession of money of their own would teach the girls how to manage it, but this last was a vain hope. The mystery of finance remained forever a closed book to Annie Sullivan, and if the whole truth be told, to Helen also.

At first Mr. Gilman thought the idea of Helen's going to college very impracticable, but Annie's earnestness and an acquaintance with Helen convinced him that it might be worth trying. It was too magnificent, too audacious a scheme to be thrown aside. Accordingly, in October, 1898, Helen appeared as a pupil in the Cambridge School for Young Ladies. At Christmas arrangements were made to have her sister Mildred with her. It was always a pleasure to Annie to have Mildred with them, for Mildred had beauty and charm, and Annie had not lost her devotion to these two qualities. Mildred was the first perfectly formed, happily surrounded child she had ever known; and it was through her that Annie had her first glimpse of what a normal carefree little girl might be like.

A few months after Helen began her studies here, Mr. Gilman, at the request of Helen's friend, Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, wrote an article for the *Century Magazine* about his work with Helen:

> I could do little for Miss Keller were it not that Miss Sullivan continues her loving superintendence, and follows her with the ministrations she has so willingly rendered all these years. Thus, while the direction of Helen's intellectual work has been committed to me, I find it necessary to depend upon Miss Sullivan for certain assistance which no acquaintance less thorough and familiar with the past would be sufficient to suggest. I am day by day impressed by the magnitude of the work that we are called upon to perform for this marvellous girl, and I can only trust that I may be in some degree equal to the demand.
>
> Miss Sullivan and I have always before us a sense of the novelty of the work, and we feel that we cannot lay it out far in advance. We are obliged to be constantly on the alert, watching developments, and prepared to do whatever is best at the time. While, therefore, we have the Harvard examinations before us as a goal, we are not

willing to say to-day that Helen will take those examinations at any given time in the future, or that we shall not at another stage find that her nature demands a cultivation different from that which is planned for the average woman. We simply desire to feel free to take one step at a time.

Helen was for the first time in her life closely associated with normal girls her own age, and for the first time had teachers who were accustomed only to normal pupils. Yet, as Mr. Gilman said in a summary of the first year's work, published in the *American Annals for the Deaf* in November, 1897:

The actual school work during the year showed little difference between the treatment of Helen and the other pupils. Miss Sullivan sat at Helen's side in the classes, interpreting to her with infinite patience the instructions of every teacher. In study hours Miss Sullivan's labours were even more arduous, for she was obliged to read everything that Helen had to learn, excepting what was prepared in Braille; she searched the lexicons and encyclopædias and gave Helen the benefit of it all. When Helen went home, Miss Sullivan went with her, and it was hers to satisfy the busy, unintermitting demands of the intensely active brain, for, though others gladly helped, there were many matters which could be treated only by the one teacher who had awakened the activity and had followed its development from the first. Now it was a German grammar which had to be read, now a French story, and then some passages from Cæsar's Commentaries. It looked like drudgery, and drudgery it would certainly have been had not love shed its benign influence over all, lightening each step and turning hardship into pleasure.

Helen's course as it was at first outlined was to cover five years. The assistant principal, Miss Harbough, thought it could be shortened to three, and a compromise was finally reached on four. She encountered difficulties in the way of getting books put into Braille in time for her to use them for her classes, but no serious obstacle presented itself, and she had not been in the school many weeks before Mr. Gilman decided that she would be able to stand part of her college entrance examinations at

the end of the year. Candidates for admission to Harvard College (Radcliffe examinations were identical with those of Harvard) had at that time to pass sixteen hours, twelve of which were considered preliminary and four advanced. If Helen could get some of these out of the way, it would make her subsequent work at the Cambridge School much less strenuous. Someone had to be with her during the ordeal to spell the questions into her hand, and while Annie Sullivan ordinarily did this, she felt, and so did everyone else, that a more neutral person should be at Helen's side on so important an occasion. The logical person was Mr. Gilman. He had for many years been a member of the corporation of Radcliffe College, was thoroughly familiar with the examination routine, and was greatly trusted by all the college authorities. But to be of any service he had to learn the manual alphabet. This, therefore, he set out to do, and by Christmas of the first year was spelling his own instructions into Helen's hand. He was a man of sound and varied scholarly background, and Helen still remembers with pleasure the work she did with him on Shakespeare, Macaulay, Burke, and Johnson. The German teacher also learned the manual alphabet, and some of the girls learned to talk with their fingers, but the main burden still fell on the shoulders of Annie Sullivan.

The Harvard examinations were held from June 29th to July 3rd. It was customary for the candidates to number their papers so that those who read them could not know who wrote them, but in Helen's case such a procedure was impossible, for she was obliged to use the typewriter while the others wrote in longhand. Since the typewriter would prove distracting to the other students, Mr. Gilman was allowed to select a quiet room for himself, and Helen was given a slight extension of time because of his imperfect use of the manual alphabet. Helen's work had been excellent, and her instructors felt little anxiety as to the result, but everyone recognized that "the examination was to be a test, not only of the ability of Miss

Keller, but also of the processes designed and carried out for years by Miss Sullivan." Both came through with flying colours. Helen passed creditably in everything and with honours in German and English.

At the beginning of 1897 Helen did not do so well. The making of certain badly needed textbooks, which were ordered from London, was delayed on account of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Helen was obliged to have a special Greek cylinder for her typewriter. Mrs. Rogers ordered it, but it was several weeks before it came, and Helen had to learn how to manipulate it. She had also to learn how to use a new machine for embossing algebra and how to construct geometrical figures by means of a cushion and wires. Meanwhile Annie wrote out in Braille problems in physics, geometry, and algebra, and pricked out the figures in geometry on stiff paper. Later the teacher in physics learned the Braille system and prepared the figures in this course and in astronomy.

In the face of all these difficulties, which she knew were temporary, Annie had come to the conclusion (greatly strengthened by Helen's success with the preliminary examinations) that Helen could be ready for Radcliffe in two more years. She and Mr. Gilman had had some slight disagreement over the management of Helen the year before; it seemed to Annie that nearly everyone who touched Helen wished to use her for his own purposes, and she did not exonerate Mr. Gilman from this charge. Helen's very presence in the Gilman School gave it wide publicity, but Annie was tired of publicity and exploitation. This was satisfactorily disposed of, but she and Mr. Gilman began the fall term of 1897 with "an amiable difference of opinion" as to how long Helen should remain in the school. His plan was to keep her at least three more years; Annie was determined to get her out in two more, but finally with great reluctance she agreed to Mr. Gilman's arrangement.

It is the natural tendency of a normal person watching Helen at work and taking account of her crippled condition, to think

that she is working too hard. It seems a pity, when it is superficially considered, that she has to work at all, but Annie demanded of her what she would have demanded of a seeing and hearing girl, demanded, in fact, a great deal more, for it took Helen more than twice as long to prepare her lessons as it did the other girls, yet she was expected to come in at the finish with as good marks as they had. Annie never let pity blind her common sense; it is to this that Helen owes the fact that she has been accepted on equal terms by the seeing and hearing, and this is the greatest pride of her life. Annie knew her pupil more intimately than anyone else, even the child's own mother. She knew her physical capacity as well as she knew her mental capacity and knew how much she could stand. She never underrated the part that their physical vitality played in their success. "A less vigorous child could never have done what she has done," Annie says, "and a less robust woman than I was would have gone to pieces under the strain."

On November 12th Helen was for natural reasons not well and had "an unusually hard time with her geometry." The day was Friday, and Annie put her to bed until Monday. Mr. Gilman told Annie that he was more than ever sure that Helen was working too hard and that he could not be a party to it. Geometry and astronomy were taken out of her programme. Annie was indignant, but after consulting some of her friends in Boston told Mr. Gilman that, while she differed with him as much as ever, she was willing to accept his decision

Mr. Gilman wrote Mrs. Keller that Annie was treating Helen cruelly, making her life a perfect grind, and that the child's health was in very precarious condition. Mrs. Keller wrote Annie from Alabama on November 22nd:

I do not need to be told that if you realized there was danger to Helen in this course that not for your right arm would you let her do it. There is no one living who knows and appreciates the faithful love, the unwearied patience that you have shown in teaching Helen. You know how largely I have left her to you, what faith and con-

fidence I have in you, and I hope you love and [have] confidence enough in me to believe that only the firm conviction that it is injuring Helen to be pressed in this way could make me oppose myself to your ambition. However much you might suspect interested motives in anyone else you cannot imagine that I have any save feelings of love for you. . . .

Six days later, Mrs. Keller again:

I always think of Helen as partly your child and whilst in this I think first of her I think of you, too, and utter ruin to the life you have striven so patiently to develop and round out.

On December 8th Annie learned that Mr. Gilman had started a movement to separate her from Helen. She could think of nothing to do then but to take Helen and Mildred, who was also in her care, to their mother in Tuscumbia. Mr. Gilman refused to let them go, showed Annie a telegram from Mrs. Keller authorizing him to take complete charge of Helen, and reminded her that before his death Captain Keller had wished them to be separated. This was true. Captain Keller had wished to exhibit Helen so as to recoup his fortunes, but Annie and her mother were determined that Helen should go on with her education. Mr. Gilman asked Helen and Mildred to come with him to his home, but both little Kellers, frightened without "Miss Annie," were stubborn and refused.

Annie went to spend the night with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Derby Fuller, and sent telegrams to Mrs. Keller, Dr. Bell, Mr. Joseph E. Chamberlin ("The Listener" on the Boston *Transcript*, an old friend of theirs), to Mrs. Hutton and to Mrs. Pratt, also an old friend. Mrs. Keller started North on the next train, and Dr. Bell sent Mr. Hitz up from Washington. It is due to Dr. Bell that so complete a record of the episode still exists, for it was he who had everyone connected with it write out a full, and in his opinion, accurate, account of what happened. These records are all now in the Volta Bureau in Washington, D.C.

When Annie returned to the Cambridge School the following day she was at first not allowed to see the children, but when she declared that she would not leave, except by force, until she did see them, she was permitted to go with them to the Howells' House (where they lived) under the care of the housekeeper, who had instructions not to allow them to leave the building. Helen had neither eaten nor slept and was "in a pitiful condition." Mildred was crying. Mr. Chamberlin called in the afternoon, and seeing the overwrought condition they were all in, persuaded Mr. Gilman to allow the three of them to go with him to his home in Wrentham. They were there at Red Farm when Mrs. Keller and Mr. Hitz arrived.

Mrs. Hutton wrote Mr. Gilman that she and Mr. Hutton protested in the strongest terms against an intention to separate Helen and her teacher. It would, she felt, be disastrous to Helen and unjustly cruel to Miss Sullivan. The money that she had collected had been contributed with the express understanding that it was for the joint support of Helen and Miss Sullivan. "In the event of any separation of the two beneficiaries the trustees, of course, have no other recourse than to return the entire sum raised to the various donors."

Mrs. Keller had met Mr. Gilman before.

> Miss Sullivan thought very highly of him [she wrote afterwards], and I had no reason to think him actuated by any motive save interest in Helen's welfare and care for the reputation of his school. . . . I really did not realize at the time what a cruel thing I was doing. Very soon the injustice of it overcame me, and I had already decided to come to Boston when Miss Sullivan's telegram, "we need you," brought me on the first train. I found Mr. Gilman had made very cruel use of the authority I had given him to distress my children and Miss Sullivan, after ten years of service. I certainly never dreamed of Miss Sullivan being forced away from Helen. I could not but feel on my arrival in Wrentham that I had been made to endure most unnecessary and uncalled for distress. Helen is in perfect physical condition, and if she shows any evidence of nervous prostration or overwork, I cannot discover it.

In a long letter to Dr. and Mrs. Bell Mr. Hitz expressed himself entirely in favour of the course that Annie had pursued.

She [Mrs. Keller] expressed her appreciation of all Mr. Gilman had done for her children during the previous school term [he wrote] but in a very emphatic manner let it be understood that she had been cruelly misled, and that any attempt to separate Helen from her teacher, Miss Sullivan, met with her unqualified condemnation.

The question of taking Helen away from Annie Sullivan never came up again. From this time on she was in complete charge. She had in the process of demonstrating her fitness for the position made many enemies, but she had also strengthened the friendship of many who were already friends: Mrs. Keller, Dr. Bell, Mrs. Hutton, the Chamberlins, and others. She remarshalled her forces, as determined as ever that she and Helen should succeed and as confident.

To Mr. Hitz, January, 1898:

Mr. Bell shall never regret his confidence if Helen and I are spared to complete the work we have begun. Something tells me, and it is not vanity either, that the day will come when the friends who have stood by us will be proud that they did so.

CHAPTER XV

Cum Laude

MRS. KELLER took Mildred South with her, and Annie decided to remain with Helen in the happy and congenial atmosphere of the Chamberlins' home, Red Farm, in the village of Wrentham. This village, and this home especially, had already become one of their favourite playgrounds. Red Farm was in the country near a lake called King Philip's Pond, after the Wampanoag chief by that name. The great oak under which the Indian was supposed to have breathed his last was not far from the house. The Pond and the other lakes for which Wrentham is famous offered opportunities for canoeing and swimming; the dirt roads invited horseback rides; the fragrant woods encouraged tramping. Helen had a tandem bicycle of her own, and there were young people in the house, the young Chamberlins, who were always bringing home guests from the schools in Boston. Some of these guests, like Edward (or Ned) Holmes, an architect from California studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the first Californian they had ever known, became lifelong friends of Helen and her teacher.

Mr. Chamberlin was a literary critic with a column in the Boston *Transcript*, and Red Farm was a gathering place for authors and editors and publishers. Mary E. Wilkins, later Freeman, was an intimate friend of the family, and it was at the Chamberlins' home that Annie and Helen knew Bliss Carman, Richard Hovey, Louise Chandler Moulton, and many other ornaments of the world of letters whose names were better known thirty years ago than they are now.

But they were not in Wrentham to have a good time, though

this was important. They were there to study. Through Mrs. Hutton Annie hired an excellent tutor in the person of Mr. Merton S. Keith of Boston, who began his work with Helen early in February, 1898.

Mrs. Hutton asked him to watch Helen closely for signs of a nervous breakdown.

> I was told [he said] that it was a common impression that she was often under too high pressure of work and in danger of breaking down. . . . I was very solemnly cautioned against incurring the risk of the realization of such woeful forebodings. Especially just at the juncture where we then were, with Helen hardly recovered from the shock of recent events, the question of health was of prime importance.

Mr. Keith began with sessions of three and one half hours a week. The period was too long and too strenuous for all of them ("Miss Sullivan was sometimes well-nigh exhausted," he said), but under the circumstances it seemed the best arrangement. Wrentham was twenty-six miles from Boston, and the trains, after the immemorial habit of trains, came at the wrong hours, but the advantages of being in the country were sufficient to offset all other inconveniences. The once-a-week lesson period continued for five months.

Mr. Keith discovered that while Helen's preparation in languages and history left little to be desired, her preparation in mathematics was deplorable.

> Everyone [he said], including the persistent, energetic, indomitable Miss Sullivan, seemed utterly discouraged over the Algebra and Geometry. I was pathetically asked again and again during the first five or six weeks, whether we were torturing poor Helen on the rack of Mathematics; whether there was a grain of profit to her in such studies, or any hope of success in the examinations in them. Of course, Helen neither liked them nor saw any good in them. One rarely likes, or sees the use of, failure. . . .
>
> My duties then, at first, were those of the kind physician, as well as those of the ambitious tutor.

He depended upon the Chamberlins for information concerning Helen's physical condition, but in three or four weeks he saw that fears of a collapse were groundless. He also came to the conclusion that there was no sense in dropping mathematics from Helen's course because of the difficulties involved. She needed the severe drill to round out her mental development; and he soon discovered that Helen's ignorance was largely due to misconceptions brought about through inadequate instruction. He had not only to give her right impressions but to wipe out erroneous ones, and he devoted all of his good New England abilities to the task. Most of the time was spent on algebra and geometry, but the languages were not neglected.

Greek and Latin were a delight to both of them. Helen's translations were at first too free and easy, but as the lessons continued they gained in accuracy without losing in beauty, and when Mr. Keith came to the end of his work he said, "I believe Miss Keller is capable of giving the world, at some future time, in rhythmical prose, a new version of Virgil, which would possess high and peculiar merit."

Mr. Keith did not know, and never learned, the manual alphabet. This meant that Annie acted as his interpreter in all his instructions to Helen. She looked up words for Helen in Latin and Greek dictionaries (these essential volumes were not in Braille), and read to her out of numerous books which were also available only in ordinary ink-print. And Annie's eyes were not improving.

Four months after the lessons began a close friend of hers wrote privately to Mr. Hitz that Annie was in a desperate frame of mind about them. She had consulted a famous oculist in New York, who told her that without another operation she would inevitably lose her sight.

The eyes are in a most aggravated state [the letter continues], . . . her sight has failed noticeably since the winter, and within the last two weeks symptoms have come which . . . fill me with alarm. She told another person who told me that she could not have any treat-

ment because of the terrible expense. . . . She is not to be commanded. . . . I dare not write Mrs. Hutton for aid or advice in this matter, for I know that she would try authority and that would fail. . . .

Months passed and there was no change.

Helen to Mrs. Hutton, March, 1899:

My teacher's eyes are no better, indeed, I think they grow more troublesome, though she is very brave and patient and will not give up. But it is most distressing to me to feel that she is sacrificing her sight for me. . . . I do wish, Mrs. Hutton, that you would try to persuade Teacher to take a rest and have her eyes treated. She will not listen to me.

Excellent doctors had by this time been secured for the eyes, and though there was still pain, there was not the slightest interruption in Helen's work with her tutor. For about thirteen months in all she studied with him. In October, 1898, she and her teacher returned to Boston, and Helen had lessons five times a week. This continued for about eight months. In June Mr. Keith came twice to Wrentham where they had rented a cottage for the summer, and on the 29th and 30th of the month Helen stood her final examinations for entrance to Harvard College. There was again the problem of having someone with her to read her the examination papers. Mr. Gilman had done this two years earlier.

But it was thought best to render it impossible that any doubt as to the genuineness and fairness of the examinations should ever arise in the mind of the most sceptical critic [says Mr Keith]. And although it seemed to me that no one ought ever to cavil at an examination which had been conducted with Miss Sullivan as interpreter, or reader, of the papers, it was agreed on both sides that someone should be found who could reproduce the papers in the raised characters used by the blind and known as Braille—someone who had had no educational, or even personal, relations with Helen and whom she had never known. Such a person was found in Mr. Eugene Vining, of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, South Boston.

But this brought up a new and unexpected complication. There had been for years so great a variety of raised prints for the blind that a person wishing to have at his disposal all that was in raised print was obliged to learn New York Point, English and American Braille, the Boston Line Letter, and the Moon type. Helen was familiar with all of them, and it made little difference to her in the languages which was used but in mathematics she had used only English Braille—the style most frequently employed in this country—and the symbols were different in each system. Mr. Vining, as she discovered two days before the examination, used the American notation. He made a hurried explanation of the different signs in algebra and geometry, and Helen thought she understood them, but she went to the examinations with many misgivings. All these were swept away by her success. She received honours only in advanced Latin, and wrote Mr. Keith that she was "bitterly disappointed."

It was a pity [says Mr. Keith] that the examinations happened to afford no better test of Miss Keller's proficiency in Greek and Mathematics. It is a wonder that the Latin examination did give something like such a test. With the novelties of the American Braille and the strange isolation in which she worked and the various incitements to nervousness to which she was exposed, the results seem wonderful. Could she have done her work under the conditions habitual to her, higher marks would have been won, but the achievement would have been really no greater.

The details of Helen's education had been followed all over the country, and even in Europe, with the deepest interest. No record of her progress had been kept beyond the one implicit in her examination papers and in the fantastic stories which from time to time appeared in the newspapers. In order to provide an authentic record and to quiet the "considerable scepticism" which followed her, the Volta Bureau now made plans to issue a new edition of the *Helen Keller Souvenir.*

The scepticism [Mr. Hitz said in his introduction to the *Souvenir*] is no doubt in large measure due to the many exaggerated and er-

roneous statements which from time to time have appeared in the public press. The undeniable fact, however, remains: that no phase of educational effort embodies more clearly evidence of the essentials requisite in the successful instruction of youth generally, than do the results attained in the case of Miss Keller. With a view to embody these in consecutive form for the benefit of educators and scientists, the Volta Bureau decided to issue the present publication.

Annie contributed letters, but her heart was not in the undertaking.

To Mr. Hitz:

You know, I told you last summer that I did not believe in enlightening the public further as to what we had done, were doing, and intended to do. I said then, and I repeat now, I do not believe our affairs concern the public and personally I would not turn my hand to set it right on any particular point. Helen and I have suffered more than you or anyone else in the world can ever understand, through the publicity that has been given her education. . . . I cannot think the new *Souvenir* will unravel the tangled web of truth and falsehood that overzealous friends and enemies have drawn about us. Time only can do that, and, as far as I am concerned, I am more than willing to work and wait, knowing that right and justice must triumph in the end.

It was now Helen's privilege to enter Radcliffe whenever she liked, but she did not begin her college course that fall. The dean, Miss Agnes Irwin, tried to persuade her to give up the idea altogether and cultivate her gift for writing, and many of their closest friends felt that the plan was madness. Helen was already a strong spiritual force; going to college would not increase it. She already had an audience that was almost world-wide; perhaps she could reach it through her writing and make money enough herself for her own and her teacher's support. She wished eventually to do something useful, and had thought of settlement work, once the college course was done.

And if she insisted upon going to college, why, asked her friends, did she have to go to Radcliffe, which obviously did

not want her? Cornell and the University of Chicago had invited her to their campuses, and it seemed much wiser to abandon Cambridge, which had been the scene of so much trouble, and which, along with Boston, was filled with so many enemies. But it was Radcliffe that Helen had set out to attend; Radcliffe from which she was determined to get her diploma. She and her teacher made one compromise. They agreed to wait for another year. At Dr. Hale's suggestion, Helen continued to study courses similar to those held at Radcliffe, and in October, 1900, she was enrolled as a regular member of the freshman class, the first time in history that anyone with her handicaps had so entered the portals of one of the institutions of higher learning.

Even then her friends did not give up their efforts to manage the course of her destiny. For about a year one of them had been in the grip of a call from God to direct Helen's life. A gentleman had suggested that Helen's name be used in connection with an American college in Cuba, and this set the lady thinking that it would be a good plan for Helen and her teacher to head a college, or rather a school, for the deaf blind in the United States. Mrs. Hutton was having difficulty in collecting the money for Helen's education, and the lady with the inspiration felt that she would never succeed. Helen's support, now that it was everybody's business, was nobody's business, and so many wealthy names were associated with hers that people in general began to think there was no use in making further contributions. Mrs.—— thought that if the Volta Bureau would get behind her plan its success would be assured, and wrote Mr. Hitz soliciting his aid.

We must admit [she said], painful as it is, that Helen, through animosity towards Annie, has enemies. . . .

I want to see Helen and Annie at the head of an institution or home, for the deaf, dumb, and blind children, the triply afflicted only, to be known as the Helen Keller Home. I have thought over this until I am so familiar with it that it seems as though everyone

must have thought of it too. You know Annie Sullivan has a wonderful amount of power for this work, which should not be lost to the world. Her active work for Helen is nearly over. She can no longer teach Helen, and ought not to do the reading even which she is doing now. Her eyes are very bad again. It is hard to say it, but few of the people interested in Helen have a thought for Annie other than as Helen's teacher. You and I love her, know her true worth, and know her tremendous force. She has told me, and I fully believe her, that if blindness comes to her again she will kill herself. The directing and training of another teacher or teachers she would be able to do if she were blind almost as well as with her sight. At any rate if she were doing something of this kind she would be more likely to keep the sight she now has. You can see as well as I her peculiar ability for this work.

The plan for the Helen Keller Home seemed at first attractive to Annie and her pupil, but they did not wish to begin until after Helen was through college. Dr. Hale was opposed to it, and so was Mr. John Harsen Rhoades. Dr. Bell pointed out that a special school for the deaf blind would cut them off from the very thing they needed most, namely, contact with seeing and hearing people. As an alternative he suggested that they found an association for the deaf blind and appoint Miss Sullivan to train others to instruct the deaf blind in their own homes, just as Helen had been taught.

Annie and Helen were not altogether free agents. The money that had been collected had been donated on the express understanding that it was for Helen's education; it could not be used in any other way without consulting the committee. The promoter of the proposed school visited various members of the committee, and presently a consultation was called in New York, with Mr. Rhoades, Mrs. Hutton, and Mark Twain, who came as the representative of Henry Rogers, who on his request had contributed the major part of the fund. When Mark Twain learned that Miss Sullivan and Helen wished above all to continue at Radcliffe, he said that while he did not know what the Lord's wishes were in the matter, he did know that

Henry Rogers was not willing to finance any of His undertakings on the recommendations of Mrs. ——. That ended it. All suggestions were put on the table, and Annie and Helen went back to Cambridge.

The atmosphere in which they set to work was more than slightly glacial. Through Mr. Gilman they had offended many who stood in positions of authority and dignity. The head of Harvard and therefore the honorary head of Radcliffe was Dr. Charles W. Eliot. Neither Annie nor Helen ever saw him. Alice Freeman Palmer, professional friend of young womanhood, lived only a few blocks away but never came to see them. The college girls were friendly, but Helen's handicaps set her apart from them, and her teacher was some ten or twelve years older than they.

During most of the time in Cambridge they had a house of their own with a sweet Irish maid to look after them, Bridget Crimmins, whom Annie loved for her own sake and because she reminded her of Maggie Carroll in Tewksbury. This home gave them a freedom they could not have had elsewhere, and because they were lively and gay in the interludes between studies, it became a happy meeting ground for young men and women, many of whom afterwards won distinction in the various fields they had chosen for themselves. Philip Smith, who married their good friend Lenore Kinney, became chief Alaskan geologist with the United States Geological Survey. It was Lenore who introduced a very literary young man by the name of John Macy who afterwards became a famous critic, especially noted for his understanding of American letters—John Macy who married Annie Sullivan and became an indelible part of her life and Helen's. Then there was young Dr. William Allan Neilson who is now president of Smith College. He was an instructor at Radcliffe while Helen was there, the only one of her teachers who learned the manual alphabet so as to talk with her directly. There was Carl Arensberg, now a well known lawyer in Pittsburgh, and Arthur

Ryder, the Sanskrit scholar. And there were still the Chamberlins and the happy week-ends in Wrentham, whole summers there, in fact, camping in a cottage on the edge of Lake Wollomonopoag. There was a glorious summer in Nova Scotia with Dr. Bell and his family, and there were long delightful visits in New York City with Nina Rhoades.

And always there was work—endless work. It takes only a sentence to say that Helen Keller finished her course at Radcliffe in four years and was graduated with honours, but no number of sentences could ever do justice to the work that went into that graduation. Mr. Rogers, Mr. Wade, and others had expensive textbooks copied for her in Braille, but it was often not possible to find out what books would be needed in time to get them copied before the class was through with them. She borrowed books in raised print from England and Germany. She read Braille pages until the tips of her fingers bled, and her teacher spelled into her hands incessantly, making herself a clear channel for knowledge to pass through. All during the classroom lectures, all during the pleasant hours of recreation, all during the evening, and often until far into the night after everyone else had gone to bed, her busy fingers were speeding away on a task that seemed to have no ending.

The sword of blindness hung over her head, but she was not afraid of it. Like Milton, she felt that her "noble task" and the acclaim which attended it was in itself sufficient support.

> *This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask*
> *Content though blind, had I no better guide.*

The world rang with a name, but it was not hers. She was only the dynamo in the basement; Helen was the beautiful structure erected above it; and her teacher was more than content that this should be.

Physically their work was as hard as a day labourer's, but they were buoyed up in many ways. They were conscious of the exhilaration soldiers feel in a good fight, conscious of the stern

and rugged beauty which attends the efforts of all heroic pioneers; and success, as one perilous obstacle after another was put behind them, made them very happy. Helen, on the whole, enjoyed her courses and was interested in everything. Her teacher was interested in seeing Helen through, but the academic courses held slight charm for her. Helen came out of college with a command of Latin and Greek, German and French, and while her teacher spelled all these languages into her hand, inventing signs for Greek and French accents, very little of them stuck to her fingers as they passed through. "It was fortunate," Dr. Neilson has said, "that the minds of the two were so different. It made it possible to know always where one stopped and the other began." Higher mathematics, the most difficult of all subjects, likewise slipped through the teacher's unreluctant fingers, but in history and literature it was different. They were both made a little dizzy by the speed with which they rushed along, but it was fascinating. Helen loved the whole tapestry of history and cared little whether it was remote or near, while her teacher was more interested in the forces which, though beginning perhaps in the past, were still operating in the present, and much more interested in what the newspapers were saying about the Philippines than in any of it. In literature she loved the great emotional poems. So did Helen, but Helen's feeling led her to the great formless artists like Walt Whitman and Swedenborg and to the quiet pastures of philosophy, but books in which the soul found peace were not for Annie Sullivan. She wanted action.

Helen was busy in many ways outside the curriculum. Her voluminous correspondence, so much of it made up of thank-you letters to people who were helping her through, went forward by fits and starts, and in 1903 her first book was published, a little essay called at the time *Optimism*, and later rechristened by the publishers, *My Key of Life*. It was immature, as one might expect of a college girl, and full of the "cocksureness" for which she still chides herself when she finds that she

has written in a way which seems to imply that she has the last word of knowledge on the subject, but it was bursting with vigour and defiance. She was tired of being pitied. She was proving and ready to prove again that she could make something out of the broken pieces of her life.

Her class in composition was under Prof. Charles Copeland ("Copey") who encouraged her to dig into her own experience and write. Thus quietly was her second book, *The Story of My Life*, begun. The daily themes attracted attention outside the classroom, and presently Mr. William Alexander of the *Ladies' Home Journal* came to ask Helen to put them together for him in a connected narrative. It seemed easy and would have been if Helen had been able to work normally. But it meant that material that had not been used in the themes must be typed out, and that material which had already been typed (if the Braille was destroyed) must be spelled back to her, and that phases of her experiences which had not been covered must be written afresh. They began blithely—the sum offered by the *Journal* was tempting—but it was not long before they found that the combination of keeping up with the classroom work and contributing to a popular magazine was too much. The *Journal* had begun publication before the story was complete and was in that frantic state which only another magazine could properly appreciate of being ready to go to press with copy missing for one of its leading articles. It was at this point that Lenore Kinney introduced John Macy, then a young instructor at Harvard. Mr. Macy was equipped with a fine intelligence, a keen critical sense, and a gift for writing. He learned the manual alphabet and set to work to spell Helen out of her difficulty. The day was saved for the *Journal*, and the completed book (the whole manuscript of which was put into Braille by Mr. Wade so that Helen could read it and correct herself) was published on the first day of spring—March 21st—in 1903.

It was Annie's first intention to have nothing in it about her-

self except what Helen wrote, but on May 12, 1902, Mr. Edward Bok wrote her a four-page letter in longhand urging her to reconsider her course. He had received the revised manuscript of *The Story of My Life* and pronounced it excellent—

. . . except for the word about yourself. Now pray do not consider me insistent, and not for a single moment would I wish to persist in a matter which may be absolutely distasteful to you. But I would not be doing my duty to the public and to my own personal convictions if I did not place this matter squarely before you for once, and for the last time.

I *know* that the public wants to know more about you than Miss Keller will tell in her articles or Mr. Macy in his. Now, I think you can feel safe in the hands of Mr. Macy and ourselves in what shall be said, and I simply want to ask your permission to this plan: That you give Mr. Macy permission to write what we desire and use his full discretion in the matter. Surely you can trust him to write tactfully and delicately about you. . . .

My idea is to add an "editor's note" to the article in which the reference to you appears, saying that you did not approve of this being done and that it is done even now under your protest. . . .

I want you to believe that I fully appreciate and honour the motives which prompt you to this self-effacement. But, nevertheless, I cannot overlook the fact that you have done a great piece of work, a wonderful piece of work, as a matter of fact, and the public should know more of the woman who has done it. . . .

The book as it finally appeared was divided into three parts: first, Helen's own story, second, a selection of her letters, edited by Mr. Macy, and, third, a supplementary account of her education by Mr. Macy, including a sketchy account of Annie's life (no mention of Tewksbury) and a number of the letters which she had written to Mrs. Hopkins.

The book brought forth a flood of reviews and letters. Helen's cousin, Dr. Hale, wrote her that he thought it and Kipling's *Kim* the two most important contributions to literature that the year had given. Mark Twain wrote:

I am charmed with your book—enchanted. You are a wonderful creature, the most wonderful in the world—you and your other half

together—Miss Sullivan, I mean, for it took the pair of you to make a complete and perfect whole. How she stands out in her letters! her brilliancy, penetration, originality, wisdom, character, and the fine literary competencies of her pen—they are all there.

A shepherd in Nevada wrote one of the most treasured letters. He completely approved Miss Sullivan's methods:

I think she has don more for Education and the people [he wrote] than Miss Frances Wilard. She is a grand Woman and you ought to Sing her prases all your Life. . . . I broke Horses all my life and I think Miss Sulivan's theory is all rite on a colt. . . . I think when she went to Alabama and took charge of that little Bronco it proved it.

There were many other letters, some ignorant, some thoughtful. The most precious words—on so many occasions this was true—came from Dr. Bell. After congratulating Mr. Macy on his skill as editor, he wrote to Annie:

These letters to Mrs. Hopkins will become a standard, the principles that guided you in the early education of Helen are of the greatest importance to all teachers. They are TRUE, and the way in which you carried them out shows—what I have all along recognized—that Helen's progress was as much due to her teacher as to herself, and that your personality and the admirable methods you pursued were integral ingredients of Helen's progress.

Now what I want to impress upon you is this:—That it is your duty to use your brilliant abilities as a teacher FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHER TEACHERS.

I don't want to bother you with this thought too much at the present time; but as soon as Helen has finished with Radcliffe College, I AM GOING FOR YOU.

You must be placed in a position to impress your ideas upon other teachers. YOU MUST TRAIN TEACHERS so that the deaf as a whole may get the benefit of your instruction.

The reviewer in the New York *Sun* drew blood when he said:

It is perhaps worth reminding the readers that the wonderful feat of drawing Helen Keller out of her hopeless darkness was only accomplished by sacrificing for it another woman's whole life, and if

ever the attempt is made in another similar case, it must be at the same cost.

One of Helen's oldest friends called this "shocking rot and rubbish." To make clear that what he said did not proceed from hostility to Helen's teacher, he said:

I wish first to render my tribute to the complete self-sacrifice of her personal interests that Miss Sullivan made in her devotion to Helen, her unceasing thought of that pupil, her skilful intelligence in adapting means to her pupil's needs, her complete devotion to her duty, and the hard, harder, hardest kind of work on her part. I think that but few saw, as I did, how hard that work really was, and, while I cannot but resent such absurdity as that Helen was nothing much, and that the methods of her education were ninety-nine per cent of her development, I will not detract even one per cent from the credit justly due Miss Sullivan.

He professed, and so have a few others, to see no difference between the way Laura Bridgman was taught and the way Helen Keller was taught. To him Helen was a prodigy; in the hands of any teacher she would have been equally wonderful. "It may be said positively," he continued, "that any good teacher in our common schools, particularly in kindergarten work, is fully qualified to teach a blind deaf pupil after she learns the manual alphabet." It was almost too easy.

The severest review of the book appeared anonymously in the New York *Nation* and was published also in the New York *Post*, and since the point raised is one that continually crops up when Helen is discussed, and since whatever touches Helen touches her teacher also, a part of the review is quoted:

All her knowledge is hearsay knowledge, her very sensations are for the most part vicarious, and yet she writes of things beyond her power of perception with the assurance of one who has verified every word.

It seems cruel to criticize this unfortunate girl who has made so much of nothing, whose life has been one long courageous effort to overcome her terrible disadvantages. No one can help feeling the

utmost sympathy for her deprivations, the greatest admiration for her pluck. And yet the criticism must be expressed, not so much for her own sake as because her writing exemplifies in a wonderful way the disregard of a principle for which writers who have the true vocation would lay down their lives. Literary sincerity is so entirely absent from it that the subject spills over from the domain of literature into that of ethics. If she were to be judged like less afflicted mortals, we should have to call a great deal of Miss Keller's autobiography unconscientious.

The reviewer quotes six examples of her illegitimate use of imagination and remarks that there are countless others. Two will suffice here:

The glorious bay lay calm and beautiful in the October sunshine, and the ships came and went like idle dreams; those seaward going slowly disappeared like clouds that change from gold to grey; those homeward coming sped more quickly, like birds that seek their mother's nest. . . .

The rooms are large and splendidly furnished; but I must confess, so much splendour is rather oppressive to me.

The great mistake of her life, the reviewer felt, was in trying to be like other people. He admitted that she had attained a certain facility in writing—

. . . as indeed almost anyone else would to whom it was nearly the sole medium of human intercourse. To the fine quality of her brain her achievements in actual examination testify. She is said to have wit, but the specimens given seem evidence to the contrary. She shows real penetration, however, when she speaks of toleration requiring the same effort of brain that it takes to balance one's self on a bicycle. When she defines beauty as a form of goodness, she is merely repeating one of those mystical sayings that have truth only for those who do not think for themselves.

John Macy answered this review in a letter to the Boston *Evening Transcript*, pointing out among other cogent observations that—

. . . Helen Keller does use words which mean to other people something which she cannot know just as we know it. What these words mean to her, we cannot say without consulting her, and it is obviously difficult for her to tell us. There is no special vocabulary for the deaf blind. If there were, we who see and hear could not be sure we understood it. The deaf blind person must use as best he can the vocabulary made for him by a race with eyes and ears.

Helen has at various times answered it herself, as best she could.

My experience has been like that of a sailor wrecked on an island where the inhabitants speak a language unknown to him, and their experiences are unlike anything he has known. I was one, they were many, there was no chance of compromise. I must learn to see with their eyes, to hear with their ears, to think in their language, and I bent all my energies to the task. I understood the necessity that life had laid upon me, and I did not even debate with myself the probable success or failure of a different course. Had it occurred to me to build a little tower of Babel for myself and others shipwrecked like me, do you think you would have scaled my castle wall or ventured to communicate with my dumb hieroglyphics? Should you have thought it worth while to find out what kind of ideas the silent, sightless inhabitants of that tower had originated in their isolation from the rest of mankind? . . . I suspect that if I had confined myself strictly to that which I knew of my own observation, without mingling it with derived knowledge, my critic would have understood me as little as he probably does the Chinese.

It does seem a little ridiculous that one who cannot tell whether the dress she has on is pink or blue should remark that pink is her favourite colour, but when she says that pink makes her think of a baby's cheek or a soft Southern breeze, that light blue means hope and dark blue determination, that grey is like a shawl about the shoulders, that the sparkle of silver makes her think of soap bubbles which have burst under her fingers, one can at least catch a glimpse of what is going on in her mind when she speaks of colour. Her teacher has always allowed her to say whatever she likes, but catches her up sharply when she finds her saying things completely incomprehensible

to those outside her experience. She once told me that in her dreams she was not conscious of the sense of touch but seemed to see things, "as in a mirror." "You can't see in a mirror, Helen," her teacher said, "any more than you can see the back of your hand." It was obviously impossible for her to explain. I then asked her what immediately came to her mind when I said the word, "horse." "His long face," she replied, expressing length with her hands. "His big form," also with the hands. "His short hair, his mane and tail." "What colour?" Helen hesitated a moment. "That depends upon what I am told," she said. She continued that she felt his life, moving her hands upward to express abounding spirits (she has often ridden horseback). She spoke of his ears twitching and smiled, and of his tail switching back and forth and called up a distressing memory of a horse that was drugged before a race. While he was running the drug took effect, and he fell, cutting himself. It is a memory which always nauseates her, yet her only impression is from what she was told. She has held a lion cub in her arms, and she has placed her hands on the throat of a grown lion while the great beast roared. She can recognize a lion in statue or bas relief. Obviously, then, she has a fairly clear idea of what a lion is like, probably as accurate an idea of his essential qualities as any seeing and hearing person. Hers is the mind of the poet, the creator—a mind with wings, and it is only those who have never come close to her who say that she is simply the mouthpiece of her teacher. It would not be possible for Helen to be the mouthpiece of anyone. Sculptors and artists who have talked with her are of the opinion that if she had not expressed herself in writing she would have expressed herself creatively in some other way. She takes what comes to her and recreates it; she never allows raw material to remain raw material; she must transform it into something peculiarly her own. It is endlessly fascinating and surprising to trace her concepts back to their source, but this is a book about her teacher, and we must get back to Radcliffe.

Cum Laude

There were ninety-six girls graduated in 1904, the largest class that the college had had up to that time. Helen finished *cum laude,* but there was no fuss over her graduation except in the newspapers, many of which carried feature stories, pictures, and editorials.

> Her fair face and wonderful story [said a Boston paper] are known now from coast to coast, but comparatively few recognized her in a tall, grave-looking girl, who sat among her classmates beside a little woman in black, her inseparable friend and teacher, Miss Sullivan.

Miss Sullivan was the only one in that gay and earnest gathering who wore the "plain costume of the outsider." No reference to her was made in any of the speeches.

CHAPTER XVI

At Home in Wrentham

About a year before Helen left college she and her teacher sold some shares of stock which Mr. Spaulding had given them and bought an old farmhouse and seven acres of neglected land in Wrentham. It was her teacher's thought, in taking such a step, to place Helen permanently in a setting which would be worthy of her, and the spot in Wrentham seemed to have every advantage. It was only an hour's ride by street car from Boston, and yet it was in the country which Helen loved, and there were winding dirt roads untainted (almost) in those days by the smell of gasoline, there were paths through the woods, and there were lakes for swimming and canoeing. There were birds and wild animals (even deer), and horses and dogs, a bull terrier to begin with, and later, Thora, the first of Helen's famous Great Danes, and her family of puppies. The house, commodious as it stood, but chopped up, like most old houses, into innumerable little rooms, offered itself gracefully for revisions and additions. Partitions were knocked out (a dairy and two pantries, for example, were made into a study for Helen) and a long balcony was erected for her on the second floor so that she could tramp up and down in comfort when the weather was too inclement for her to go out of doors. Ropes and wires were stretched from tree to tree and building to building so that she could move about unattended and caress the flowers and the fine old trees. To this home, for they had already made it a home in the deepest sense of the word, Annie and Helen made their way after the graduation exercises, travelling by street car.

The fantastic legend through which they had so long moved followed them. "The house," wrote a visitor who came that first year bearing credentials from His Majesty, the King of Sweden, "is beautifully situated in a large park, the whole property (together with all the furniture in the house) having been bought by national subscription and presented to her [Helen] along with a yearly allowance of two thousand dollars, which sum shall on her death be used for the training of deaf-blind children." In France the story was slightly different but equally false. "Boston," thus the French account, "the most intellectual city, the Athens of the United States, had on the day after the examinations offered this house in homage to the young girl who had won a victory without parallel of the spirit over matter, of the immortal soul over the senses." In many parts of Europe Helen was still regarded as "the masterpiece of American bluff," and a long procession of wise men from the East came during the next few years in the hope of discrediting her. Not one ever carried his doubts away with him.

And it was not the unparalleled victory of the spirit over matter or the soul over the senses which made Annie and Helen happy as they left Cambridge. So far as that was concerned, they had done little more at Radcliffe than they had done in the years that preceded Radcliffe, but in graduating from that distinguished institution Helen had proved her genuineness. No concessions had been made to her because of her handicaps, and her teacher had not been present at any of her examinations. The diploma was an impregnable witness to her independent power, and it is for this reason that her teacher has always cherished more tenderly than any other document that ever came into her possession the piece of sheepskin inscribed in Latin and signed by Charles W. Eliot which states that Helen Keller, having satisfactorily completed the required courses, is a graduate of Radcliffe College "*in artibus cum laude.*" Now that Helen had the degree they could both see, as Miss Irwin and others had suggested in the beginning, that the

time spent in getting it might have been more profitably employed, except that it did bear public witness to what Helen was capable of doing. "For Helen Keller to have won a degree under such difficult conditions is worth something," her teacher says. "But from an educational viewpoint I consider our four years in college wasted, except for the genuine service rendered by Charles T. Copeland, her instructor in English. He helped her to self-expression. And that is what real education means."

Helen's future was still unsettled. Just what use she was to make of her education now that she had it was a point yet to be determined. She intended to write, of course. She thought she might be able to do translations or emboss books for the blind. Or she and her teacher might fill the house with little deaf blind children and teach them. She had not given up the idea of settlement work. The only thing out of the question was that they should remain idle. They first wanted rest, and for one brief summer they had it. After that they wanted a chance to be of some use in the world.

Their first conspicuous opportunity came in the fall of 1904. It was during their last months at Radcliffe that they had accepted an invitation to be present at the Exposition which was held in St. Louis from the first of April until the first of December to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. The date was to have been 1903, but it was 1904, because of a delay in getting the buildings ready. The president of the Exposition was Mr. David Rowland Francis who later became our ambassador to Russia; Miss Sullivan and Helen were invited to be the guests of his sister-in-law during their visit to St. Louis. Young Mr. John Macy went with them. The object in having Helen there was to awaken a world-wide interest in the education of the deaf blind. A number of the leading teachers of the deaf and blind were present, including Helen's old friend, Mr. William Wade, who in his survey of the deaf blind in the United States had made

the first exhaustive study ever made in the world of this unfortunate group. Dr. Gallaudet was there, president of the college in Washington, D.C., which bears his father's name, the first school of college rank ever established in America for the deaf. Miss Sarah Fuller, who taught Helen the elements of speech, was to have been present but was too ill to make the journey.

October 18th was set apart as Helen Keller Day, and exercises were held in Congress Hall with Mr. Francis presiding. It was a notable occasion.

> Never [says a St. Louis newspaper] was a greater tribute paid than was voluntarily offered to the girl in whose name the day was celebrated.
>
> Long before the hour for the opening of Congress Hall, where the exercises were held, the crowd began to gather. It came in the early hours of the morning, at first by twos and threes and later in groups. At 10 o'clock it was a solid mass of pushing humanity all intent upon reaching Congress Hall. Those who were first to arrive crowded the hall to its utmost capacity, and the guards had to keep back the 500 to 600 surplus people eager to enter. The windows had to be guarded, for some enterprising individuals had secured step-ladders and climbed in, a number of very sedate old gentlemen and ladies coming by this entrance, while the window seats, at least eight feet above the floor, were all filled.

The guards lost control of the crowds, Helen's dress was torn, and some of the roses were snatched off her hat for souvenirs before she could get to the platform, which presently she reached, battered and dishevelled but smiling. The front seats were reserved for children from the schools for the deaf and dumb, "and," the newspaper continues, "the afflicted ones formed a pathetic contrast to the hustling masses of not too well-mannered men and women who pressed forward." Helen made a speech in which her articulation was so nearly perfect that Mr. Francis was able to repeat it after her without the help of Miss Sullivan. The blind Van Zant twins from the Kansas School for the Blind played several violin selections.

They were quite small and had to be lifted to a table so the audience could see them, and the music must have been deplorable, for the newspaper speaks of the impassive and stoical way in which they fingered the strings of their instruments, but it was affecting, and all over the hall men and women wiped tears from their eyes.

In the evening Helen was the guest of honour at a reception held in the Missouri building.

> The reception in the art room took place early in the evening, Miss Keller and Miss Sullivan standing together, while many hundreds of people [three thousand] were ushered through in single file, guards hurrying them on, no one being encouraged to shake hands with Miss Keller. When the Van Zant twins came along, however, she insisted upon kissing them. . . .
>
> Miss Keller wore a white lace gown, high-necked, with transparent yoke and elbow sleeves. She wore a pale yellow rose in her hair. Miss Sullivan's gown was black lace with jet trimming on the bodice.

Later the reception adjourned to the ballroom where a number of blind people and pupils from the schools for the deaf had been seated for a long time waiting for Helen. Music was played, "but the audience was for the most part unheeding, and fingers flew fast in the expression of the manual language."

All of this was gratifying and spectacular, typical of what Helen had met and was to meet when she appeared before audiences, but the great rush of emotion spent itself on the way to her. The demonstrations at the exposition were not followed, as she and her teacher hoped they would be, by strong, constructive work for the deaf blind. That work, more than a quarter of a century afterwards, remains to be done.

When they came back to Wrentham they brought their former problems with them. They were still unsettled, but chafing at the bit and anxious to be on their way.

From an undated letter of Annie Sullivan's, written about this time:

> Later, after everyone had gone to bed, I went out on the porch to say good-night to the fragrant, beautiful world lying so quietly

under the pines. There was only the sound of one bird talking in his sleep to break the stillness. The lake had lost the glow that earlier in the evening had made it so alluring and looked white and peaceful in the twilight. Somehow, I felt out of sympathy with the calm loveliness of the night. My heart was hot and impatient—impatient because the repression and self-effacement of a lifetime—and my life seems a century long as I look back upon it—have not stilled its passionate unrest. . . .

For a long time now she had been carrying on an argument with herself. The question of Helen she had decided once and for all. A maid could see that Helen was neatly dressed and look after her small personal needs, but these were the least of Helen's desires. She could not so easily find someone to read for her endlessly the things she wanted which were not in raised print, someone who would be willing to spell tirelessly into her hands to keep her in touch with the great happenings of the day, the idle and agreeable gossip of the neighbourhood, and the changing beauty of the world that surrounded her. She would have to go far to find someone who understood her as well or who loved her as much as her devoted teacher. Efforts had been made to carry the teacher away to another pupil, but she had long since decided that her place was at Helen's side. Helen was her job, her child, her very life. This new decision that she was facing, she knew, would bring far-reaching and perhaps disturbing changes, and she tried to thrust it aside. But she could not. On May 2, 1905, she and John Macy were married in the living room of the house in Wrentham, and a new chapter in the history of Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller was begun.

From the first there were many arguments against the marriage, and Annie Sullivan presented them all. First, there was Helen. Helen must always come first. That was understood and accepted. Then there was the difference in age. She was thirty-nine. John Macy was twenty-eight, nearer to the age of Helen than to that of her teacher, a fact which incidentally led

to newspaper rumours during the period of courtship that it was Helen and not Miss Sullivan that the young instructor from Harvard was about to marry. The union involved the merger of three strong, definite personalities, each in his own way gifted. In eighteen years of constant association with her, Annie Sullivan had not made the slightest change in Helen's temperament. She could not have made such a change if she had tried, and she had not tried. There were many subjects on which they could not agree. She finally consented to the marriage but reconsidered so many times that Mr. Macy threatened to print "Subject to change without notice" at the bottom of the wedding invitations.

The situation was so charged with dynamite that Annie knew that the friends who had helped them through the years of preparation would be troubled about Helen. It was to reassure them that she wrote the following letter to Mrs. Hutton:

This is to be a business letter. . . .

We are to be married a good deal sooner than we expected when we announced our engagement. Mr. Macy's affairs are such that we can be married in May. As the time draws near for me to enter new legal relations, I feel that I ought to make a statement of Helen's and my affairs and suggest a plan for the management of her income in the future. If there is any point that you do not approve, will you kindly tell me how I ought to change it? And will you also kindly let Mr. Rogers see my letter?

If I had always been a good business woman I should now be able to make a more satisfactory accounting of my stewardship. Had I kept all the accounts I ought to have kept, and written all the letters I ought to have written, I should at this moment feel very good and very happy; but I much doubt if I should have accomplished anything else. I have shirked business affairs as much as possible. I hate the very thought of addition and subtraction, and whenever I try to fathom the mysteries of my accounts, I am convinced of the necessity of sending all my daughters to a business college where they shall learn cooking and bookkeeping and how to keep a servant good-natured, and I do not care if they know nothing else. In the absence of intelligible records, it seems to me that our friends must be content

with what I have to show in the way of accomplishment, and believe that the details have been fairly well attended to, since the results are not altogether unsatisfactory. Clearly this letter is not the place for sentiment—I have said it is to be a business letter; but as I go over in my mind all that the past eighteen years have brought Helen and me of kindness, of generous aid and disinterested service, I feel that we have fallen upon good days and among God's people.

Our house and furnishings and seven acres of land represent what Helen and I together have earned and saved of what has been given us. I have made a will, leaving the house to Helen, and she intends to make a similar will in my favour. In consideration of her part ownership of the house and furnishings, she shall always have her home here, and the expenses of her living Mr. Macy and I shall bear.

There remain two sources of income to be accounted for. The first is the money from the Fund which is now in trust in New York, and which yields us eight hundred and forty dollars a year. All this I wish to go to Helen, and I shall now open a separate bank account for her. The second source of income is the book-contracts now active, and the money likely to come from magazine articles and further book-contracts.

Of course you know that whatever Helen writes represents my labour as well as hers. The genius is hers, but much of the drudgery is mine. The conditions are such that she could not prepare a paper for publication without my help. The difficulties under which she works are so insurmountable. Someone must always be at her side to read to her, to keep her typewriter in order, to read over her manuscript, make corrections, and look up words for her, and to do the many things which she would do for herself if she had her sight. I make this statement because Helen's friends have not always understood what the relations between her and me really are. They have thought her earning capacity independent of me, and one person at least has hinted that financially she might be better off without me. Helen feels differently, and when the book-contracts were made, she insisted that they should revert to me on her death. It is also her wish to divide equally with me, during her life, all the money that comes to her as our joint earnings. I am willing to accept one third. Does this seem a just arrangement?

Helen will have something more than a thousand dollars a year. With no living expenses she hopes to be able to have Mildred with her. I hope this can be arranged; for it would make for Helen's happiness, giving her a congenial young companion and making it

possible for her to go about and see her friends oftener. This means that Mildred would have to depend on Helen for her support. She is now teaching in Alabama and in part supporting her mother. Mr. Macy and I shall be very glad to make a home for them both.

I am afraid I have forgotten more than I have remembered of business. But one thing is certain, my marriage shall make no difference in my love and care for Helen, and as far as is possible I shall share every happiness with her.

I have said nothing about that unfortunate investment in a coal mine, because there is nothing to say that I have not said before. I have suffered sharply for that piece of folly, and I hardly need add that I shall not again venture upon the troubled waters of the stock market. I believe the mine is to be sold next month. It is vastly irritating to think how many pleasures and nice things went down with that coal-ship.

The small group of wedding guests, including Mr. Macy's family, Mrs. Keller, Mr. Hitz, Mrs. Hopkins, Philip Smith, and his wife Lenore, assembled at noon. One came uninvited in the person of a census taker who was summarily dismissed with none of his questions answered. The bride herself had helped prepare the luncheon and had baked the wedding cake. At two o'clock they all went into the living room and stood before a large window decorated with flowers and ferns. The groom was unattended. Helen stood beside her teacher, and Lenore stood beside Helen, spelling the service into her hand. Dr. Edward Everett Hale performed the ceremony.

It is not likely that there have been many weddings where so little attention was paid to the bride. Everybody, including the bride, and perhaps even the groom, was thinking of Helen. It was characteristic of Dr. Hale's thoughtfulness that he wrote to her the following day:

I could not talk to you yesterday nearly as much as I wanted to, but I do want to congratulate you with all my heart and soul and strength as to the possibilities for you which I see in the new marriage, and I long to say to you that you have gained a brother and have not lost a sister.

The tie between you and our dear Annie is as close as any tie can

possibly be. I dare say plenty of people have told you that there is nothing like it in history or literature. You do not care anything about that. You know just how much she loves you and how much you love her. Now, bear in mind that love is not something to be measured out in pints or pecks. It is infinite in all its relations. And never permit yourself for an instant to think that Annie loves you less than she ever did, or that the tie to her husband can tempt her to love you less. She will love you more.

I suppose that God put us into the world for this, that from week to week we might live more, that we might be more, and do more, and enjoy more. That we might be grown-up children of his instead of being babies of his. Now as life enlarges this power of love increases. Take my case: With every new subject which I have studied, for instance, with every new language which I have learned my life has been enlarged. My life enlarged when I went to Europe; my life enlarged when I learned about the Roentgen ray. And under exactly this law my life has enlarged with every true friend whom I have ever really known and really trusted. Dear Helen, your life may be enlarged and will, with your intercourse with your new brother.

I hope your mother will read you this note. I am sure she will say that it is all true. And I shall be very glad if she says that there is no use in writing it to you.

The wedding was a matter of deep satisfaction to Mrs. Keller. She admired Mr. Macy's intelligence, his alert, critical mind, and loved his gentleness and charm. His wholesome presence seemed to her exactly what Helen and her teacher needed, they who for so many years had been "cut off from everything human and natural." Now they had someone to look after them, to tease them out of their vast solemnities, someone to help them and love them. "It would have been too cruel," she wrote Mr. Macy, "if you had not loved Helen."

They were young and merry in those days, the Macys and Helen, and the house became an abiding place of high spirits and good fun. Annie put into practice the domestic arts she had learned from Mrs. Keller and became famous for the delicacies she prepared for the table and the flowers she raised

in the garden. The latchstring hung outside, and the house was nearly always full. Mrs. Hopkins came to spend months at a time, and, remembering the pitiable child she had befriended at the Perkins Institution, felt that she was living on the edge of a fairy tale which had somehow worked itself out before her astonished eyes. She never got used to it. "Oh, my, oh, my, oh, my! My, my alive," she kept saying.

Mr. Hitz came every summer. He was nearly eighty years old when Annie was married, and very deaf, but he was still "the picturesque secretary," and Annie says to-day that the walls of her memory hold no more delightful picture than that of him and Helen walking together through the Wrentham woods, the young blind woman and the old man with the long white beard spelling German into her hand, neither of them paying the slightest attention to where they were going and both stopping to sit on everything they could find to sit on, both supremely happy. A very special bond united them.

A few years earlier Mr. Hitz, who was a devout member of the New Church, had given Helen a copy of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* to help her in correlating her impressions of things with the impressions of those who could see and hear. Helen took the book, she said, with no more awareness of the new joy that was coming into her life than she had felt on that day so many years before when she stood on the piazza steps in Tuscumbia waiting for her teacher, but she had not covered many pages before her heart gave a "joyous bound," and she had not come to the end of the volume before she knew that she had found her faith. Some of her friends, and the Macys were in this group, considered the Swedish seer a great man who in the later years of his life went crazy and founded a religion. Helen was not unaware of their attitude, for they made no secret of it, but Swedenborg, as she learned more and more about him through Mr. Hitz, became for her the supreme reality. As for his "illumination" into the heavens where he talked with God, it was only a little more miraculous than her

own "illumination" into the world of sight and hearing. Mr. Hitz learned Braille and dedicated the first hours of the day, even during the winter when he was busy at the Volta Bureau, to copying for Helen extracts from the books of Swedenborg and punching out in the same way long explanations of obscure passages. In spite of the barriers of age and affliction, he and Helen were one in spirit. No other friend, not even her teacher, ever came closer to the soul of Helen, and no other, save only her teacher, ever brought more into her life.

She remembers him as "a gentle quiet figure walking along softly with his hand lightly on my arm." His slow quaint spelling, his loose clothes, his velvet cap, his odd gait, his pockets filled with needles and thread, thimbles, and safety pins, string, bottles, bandages, plasters, spectacles, and little books, all served to endear him to the two young women he had so long befriended. No guest was ever more welcome.

Mrs. Keller, now "Mother Keller" to all of them, was another beloved guest who came for weeks at a time, and the lively, brilliant conversation was spelled into Helen's hand. They were never so engrossed as to forget her. She was never left out, except when her own safety demanded it, as on one occasion when the woods near the house caught fire and she was hurried off to the sidelines. She stood where she was told to stand, but a friend who saw her has never forgotten the picture she made, sniffing the breeze, with her hands stretched hungrily before her—waiting. Waiting.

She and Mr. Macy were both engaged in writing, and some of their most important work was done during these early years in Wrentham. Here Mr. Macy first made a name for himself as a vital and original critic of American letters. In addition to his duties as associate editor of the *Youth's Companion*, a position which he held until 1909, he wrote a life of Poe, *A Guide to Reading*, and a number of fine courageous essays, many of which were later published as *The Spirit of American Literature*. Helen wrote *The World I Live In*, in which she told

minutely how she received her impressions so as to answer those who complained that in *The Story of My Life* she did not know what she was talking about. She wrote "The Song of the Stone Wall," a poem in which she recorded her joy in helping build a stone wall around the Wrentham acres, and began a long epic poem recounting her deliverance from darkness and silence. Her best critic—the best critic she ever had—was Mr. Macy. He pruned her style of its wordiness, curbed her proneness to dogmatic preaching, and generally pulled her down out of the clouds. She and Mr. Macy were both under the vitalizing influence of Annie Sullivan, who, now that she was no longer obliged to read to meet a schedule, was beginning to enjoy herself in the by-ways of literature, carrying Helen along with her most of the time. It was one of these excursions which gave Helen's friends the first of the many shocks they were to sustain in the years to come.

The perennial question as to whether Shakespeare actually wrote the plays which are attributed to him came sharply into focus in 1908 and 1909 with the publication of two books, *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*, by Granville George Greenwood, and *Some Acrostic Signatures of Francis Bacon*, by Mr. William Stone Booth. Both bore the imprints of distinguished publishers, the first that of the John Lane Company, the second of the Houghton Mifflin Company. The Macys, ever on watch for new ideas, read both of them almost before the ink was dry from the presses. They dipped into the older books on the subject like Delia Bacon's and Ignatius Donnelly's, and the argument seemed to them, as it has to many other intelligent people, entirely in favour of Francis Bacon. Both sides were spelled to Helen (perhaps not impartially) and the acrostics were copied in Braille so that she could feel them with her fingers. In the enthusiasm of the moment she wrote an article and sent it to her old friend Mr. Gilder, who was still editor of the *Century Magazine*. She told him that she had no new ideas to advance, but she hoped that her article would lead those

who were interested in her to investigate the subject for themselves.

Mr. Gilder was distressed. He admitted that there must be something to be said for Bacon, or sensible people, like the Houghton Mifflin Company, for example, and themselves, would not take him seriously as the author of Shakespeare's plays, but it seemed to him a great pity that Helen should be drawn into so contentious a subject, especially on what was inevitably the losing side. Mr. Gilder had encouraged Helen to write *The World I Live In* and "The Song of the Stone Wall" and had published both in the *Century*. He spoke out of the sincerest interest in her literary career. He felt that she could only be injured by such an article as the one on Bacon and Shakespeare, and that the Macys could only be censured for allowing her to write it. Helen was unconvinced. She submitted the article elsewhere, but it has never been published.

Except for the Macys, only Mark Twain tried to comfort and encourage her. He too had leapt joyfully into the controversy, and, not unnaturally, he too sided with Bacon. When the Macys and Helen visited him at Stormfield in February, 1909, they found him already at work on a mischievous and engaging small book which he called *Is Shakespeare Dead?* In it he drew a parallel between Shakespeare and Satan, so far as what is actually known about them is concerned, declared that Shakespeare was a Brontosaur consisting of nine bones of fact and six hundred barrels of plaster of Paris, and, amid much other delightful fooling, proved, at least to his own satisfaction, that whoever wrote the plays, and it may have been Bacon, it was certainly not Shakespeare.

In that booklet [he wrote Helen in June after he had learned of her difficulties] I courteously hinted at the long-ago well established fact that even the most gifted human being is merely an ass, and always an ass, when his forebears have furnished him an idol to worship. Reasonings cannot convert him, facts cannot influence him. I wrote the booklet for pleasure—*not* in the expectation of convincing any-

body that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare. And don't you write in any such expectation. Such labours are not worth the ink and the paper—except when you do them for the pleasure of it. Shakespeare the Stratford tradesman will still be the divine Shakespeare to our posterity a thousand years hence.

The whole incident is unimportant except that it stands as Helen's first public declaration of independence. It was an announcement to whomever it might concern that the Wrentham household was not to be held in the bondage of tradition. Before they had finished breaking their lances against the Stratford tradesman they were sharpening their swords for another attack, though even Helen did not know at the time that she was preparing for battle.

She had by this time made two discoveries about her writing. One was that she would never be able to make a living at it. The other was that she was limited to two subjects. One was herself. She was tired of that when she came to Wrentham, and after she finished *The World I Live In* she felt that she had nothing left to say.

The other subject was the blind. She wrote articles for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Youth's Companion*, *World's Work*, and other magazines, on the prevention of blindness, the conservation of eyesight, the training of blind children, the care of the adult blind, the public duty to the blind, and similar subjects. She was asked to speak before associations and to plead before legislatures, and in 1906, the year after her teacher's marriage, she was appointed a member of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. She felt her unfitness for the position, and in accepting it wrote to the Governor:

I could have wished that you had appointed in my stead my teacher, Mrs. Macy, whose long experience gives her unique qualifications in all work for the blind. What reconciles me is the fact, which you doubtless took into account, that she must always be at my side to give me the benefit of her wisdom.

But it was always Helen who got the appointments, always Helen for whom people asked. The distinguished visitors who came to Wrentham always consulted her about the problems of the deaf blind, the blind, or the deaf, as the case might be, though it seems a little reasonable that the teacher who had handled the problems and not the pupil was a better one to answer the questions. Helen was treated like a superwoman, a goddess. One fat German woman actually waddled down to the lake in front of her house to dip her hands in the water in which Helen had bathed! Wherever she went the afflicted came to her and clung as if some virtue might accrue to them simply by touching the hem of her garment. Those with sight brought her stories of the crippled, the feeble-minded, the perverted, the deaf, the blind, the defeated, and begged her to help. She found herself surrounded by the world from which she had tried to escape but from which neither her heart nor her inclination would allow her to escape. It was a small world, compared with the great bustling world outside, and its sorrowful problems, except to those who were forced to live in it, were not important in comparison with such questions as high tariff, national expansion, immigration, and the price of steel. In the greedy race for the good things life has to offer they were left far behind except when their swifter-footed brothers and sisters stopped to lend a hand. And those who thought of stopping had little to offer but the impertinence of philanthropy.

Helen's home, or rather Helen's name, became a clearing house for information concerning the blind, the first national clearing house in the United States for information connected with all phases of the work. It grieved her that all she had to offer was "sympathy, faith, and good-will," but these she gave in abundance to mothers struggling with afflicted children, to blind young men and women in college, to old men and women stagnating at home, to teachers, legislators, doctors, and others. So many letters came asking for her advice that she was hardly able to keep up with them. In order to answer them intelligently

she was obliged to read, or have read to her, reams of material about the ways in which the various problems were handled not only in this country but in England and France and Germany as well. She thought of writing a book so as to consolidate the information she had gathered, but with the rush of answering letters and keeping house and trying to make a living there was no time to do it. It was all and sometimes more than she and the Macys could do to take care of the letters from day to day as they came in.

In throwing the weight of their influence on the side of the distressed she and her teacher found themselves in a singular position. The study of the blind involved many larger problems of industry and labour. Their findings here confirmed what Annie had already learned at Tewksbury. She and Helen knew, as few knew, how hard life could be for the handicapped, but when out of their rich knowledge they protested that the underdog (whatever the reasons that shoved him under) was often a person who had had no chance to be anything else they found that they themselves were used to refute their own words. If it was so hard, how had they ever been able to raise themselves to the pinnacle they now occupied? It was in vain for them to respond that the pinnacle was, after all, only a little one, in vain for them to declare that all along they had enjoyed many advantages denied to their less fortunate comrades in adversity.

Annie had never been able to reconcile herself to the sharp contrasts life offered her. Gilded names sprinkle the pages of her story, but the years had not sufficed to stifle the memories of Tewksbury, those dark memories locked so deep in her heart. She was constantly called upon to make violent adjustments. Expensive delicacies one evening at the home of one of their wealthy friends, with the soft light of candles reflected on the smooth surface of polished silver, hothouse roses at twenty dollars a dozen, expert butlers, polite, cultivated voices wondering idly whether the winter might not be more pleasantly spent

HELEN KELLER AND MRS. MACY
Wrentham.

THE HOME IN WRENTHAM

in Italy than in Algiers. Next evening no dinner at all, but an agonized visit with the heartbroken wife of a man blinded and crippled in a factory accident whose burden was to know not only how to take care of her husband but how also to feed their children.

She and Helen were organically incapable of plastering over such situations with neat packages of advice, a little money, and an assurance that God was still in His heaven and all was right with the world. Something was very wrong with the world. Plenty of ignorant, kind-hearted men and women were trying to help, but they were only healing the outside of the cancer. They did not dare cut in and try to remove it. It was better to cover it up and say it wasn't there.

In the matter of blindness alone the emphasis when Helen first went to Wrentham was still on taking care of those who were already blind, not on preventing blindness, and when, in 1907, she wrote an article for the *Ladies' Home Journal* on the prevention of blindness in new-born children she was venturing into a field where no womanly woman was supposed to go. She was not even supposed to know that it existed. Venereal disease in those days was not discussed in polite society, and words that later found their way into the pages of fashionable novels were in 1907 confined to the pages of medical journals.

Mrs. Macy and Helen were peculiarly equipped as crusaders for the sightless. Helen had known blindness since she could remember, and deep in her heart her teacher knew that some day she too would join Helen in the dark. Mr. Macy tried to spare her eyes as much as possible, but she continued to abuse them, both for her own sake and for Helen's, knowing to the last dim ray of light what the cost would be, but willing to pay it. Helen had become, as Mr. Macy once expressed it, more of an institution than a woman. Helen was president, but Mrs. Macy was chairman of the board, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, janitor, matron, and office boy. And the institution around 1911 began to widen its activities. It turned Socialist.

Contrary to the general belief, Mrs. Macy did not rush into this movement impulsively, pulling Helen in after her. Headstrong and wayward as she is, she has never dashed recklessly into anything where Helen is concerned. The Wrentham household went into Socialism slowly, one by one, first Mr. Macy, then Helen, and two or three years later, Mrs. Macy.

The movement had been ripening in this country for some time. The Social Democrat party was formed the year that Helen entered college and nominated for the presidency that year an ex-locomotive fireman who had recently conducted the Pullman strike in Chicago, one Mr. Eugene Victor Debs. Debs was defeated, but the following year the Socialist party was formed, and Socialists began to quote such men as Abraham Lincoln, James Russell Lowell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley (to whose paper Karl Marx himself had contributed articles), and many others of equal eminence and respectability, in support of their doctrines. Budding Socialists read Tolstoi, Henry George, Henry Demarest Lloyd, Edward Bellamy, H. G. Wells, and almost anybody else (Socialist or not) who offered a new solution for the world's problems. Mr. Macy was one of the few who could (and did) actually read Karl Marx in the original German, a feat not possible to many of his most devout followers. He was therefore converted at the source. Karl Marx converted him. It was Karl Marx at second hand through Mr. Macy and H. G. Wells at first hand in the little book called *New Worlds for Old* who converted Helen. But it took more than theory to persuade Mrs. Macy to join them. It took the strike in the textile mills at Lawrence, Mass.

This strike, which was one of the most noteworthy victories of the Industrial Workers of the World, began on January 12, 1912, when the owners of the mills, following the enactment of a state law reducing the number of hours that women and children might work in the factories, cut their miserable wages in proportion. The strike was ably handled. One of the leading organizers was a young Italian by the name of Joe Ettor, a man

of great executive ability and sound common sense. He pleaded with the strikers for peace and reminded them that, in the last analysis, if any blood was shed, it would be theirs. The owners were armed and protected, he said, first by the police, second by the state militia, and third, if it should be necessary, by the United States army. But, he reminded the strikers, they too were protected. They were workers, and their skill at their trade was their weapon. "The policeman's club and the militiaman's bayonet cannot weave cloth," he said. "It requires textile workers to do that." Ettor's chief lieutenant in the early days of the strike was a young Italian poet, Arturo Giovannitti, who came originally from the province of Abruzzi in Italy.

On the 29th of January one of the strikers, a girl, was shot dead, and the two leaders, Ettor and Giovannitti, were accused of her murder and locked up, though there did not seem, even at the time, any clear reason why they should have shot one of their own people. But it was the hope of the police that the arrest, just or unjust, would break the strike. If the leaders were taken away, the people would fall into line and go back to work. But Big Bill Haywood came to take charge. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the "Joan of Arc" of Labour, came. A strike committee was formed of fifty-six members with fifty-six in reserve in case of further arrests. Twenty-seven different languages were represented in the committee members. Margaret Sanger helped with the most serious problem—the children—while Samuel Gompers, frightened at the strength of the movement, repudiated it. The American Federation of Labor was never much in sympathy with the Industrial Workers of the World. But the strike gathered strength as it went along. Jack London was interested. Emma Goldman held meetings in New York City. And when peace was made on March 12th it was made on the terms that the workers dictated.

Ending the strike, however, did not immediately bring freedom to Joe Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti, and the Wrentham household followed the agitation in their behalf as fervently as

they had already followed the harrowing details of the strike. They were greatly attracted to Ettor and Giovannitti—Joe and Arturo, as they later called them—and greatly relieved when in November they were finally set free. It is interesting to note in the light of later developments that one of the leaders in the movement to free them was another young Italian, an obscure shoemaker whose name was Nicola Sacco.

All might have gone well if Helen had kept quiet, but Helen never keeps quiet. She was born with an evangelical attitude towards ideas. What her mind thinks her heart must speak. She must make converts. Her older friends were outraged. That a woman who had known Edward Everett Hale, Phillips Brooks, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and other men of that calibre should have traffic with such refuse as these Lawrence strikers was intolerable. The one small grain of satisfaction left to them was that it could not have been Helen's fault. The Macys, thinly disguised in print as "those near her," had pushed her into it. It did no good for Helen to remind them that she had read John Spargo and H. G. Wells and Robert Hunter for herself, that she had followed the Lawrence strike intimately and, she felt, with an unbiassed mind. It did no good for her to say that while it was true that she could not see the degrading conditions under which factory workers were forced to live, she could smell them, and that she could feel the wizened faces of the little children. No one cared what the Macys thought, but Helen's opinions were a matter of public concern.

It took her a long time to learn, indeed, she has never quite learned it, that she cannot help an unpopular cause by endorsing it. *She* was never blamed, this was for her the worst of it, always someone else. When she announced that she was a Socialist, the Socialists were accused of using her to advertise themselves. When she marched in a suffrage parade the same charge was brought against the suffragists. When during the World War she lifted her voice for peace she was called a supermegaphone for undesirable citizens, and it was suggested that

she, or someone, ought to be put in jail for it. When she went into vaudeville in an excited effort to provide for her teacher's old age she was accused of exhibiting her afflictions for the sake of publicity (as if Helen needed publicity!), and when a few years after the noble experiment was under way she said that she did not think that prohibition had worked or could work, she was tearfully accused throughout the country of a betrayal of all that was fine and beautiful.

The *Outlook*, in reporting the Lawrence strike, said of Bill Haywood words which might have been said of Helen's teacher:

> Haywood is a man who believes in men, not as you and I believe in them, but fervently, uncompromisingly, with an obstinate faith in the universal good will and constancy of the workers worthy of a great religious leader. That is what makes him supremely dangerous.

Mrs. Macy might have been a supremely dangerous woman if she had had Helen's apostolic fervour—if a supremely dangerous woman is one who wishes to tear down and rebuild. She has had flurries of the evangelical spirit, but they have never lasted. She still has an incredible, heartbreaking faith in people, but she has left to others the task of making them over. No Vanderbilt ever damned the public more heartily than this child of the poorhouse.

But if Helen wished to remake the world here and now it was Helen's privilege. Helen set out to do it, but she soon discovered that while she was a goddess and an archpriestess so long as she stood with the majority, she was an ignorant woman who did not know what she was talking about if she came out in opposition to them. Reporters, correspondents, and the "Pro Bono Publicos" who write letters to the newspapers, constantly reminded her that she was blind and deaf and could not therefore really have competent knowledge about anything. Opposition stiffened all the stubbornness that Helen had inherited from her Adams ancestors, and, moreover, she was strengthened

then and forever afterwards by the presence of one person who never taunted her with her afflictions, who listened attentively to what she had to say even when (as was often the case) she disagreed with every word of it, one who encouraged her to follow wherever her spirit beckoned, to develop herself according to the law of her own being and no other, and this person was her glorious teacher. "She has never," Helen says a little pathetically, "made me feel that I was different from other people."

CHAPTER XVII
New Horizons

THE city of Schenectady, N. Y., famous now for other reasons, attracted national attention in 1912 by electing a Socialist mayor in the person of the Reverend George Richard Lunn, the first Socialist mayor ever elected in the state of New York. In May—his term began in January—his secretary, young Mr. Walter Lippmann (famous now also for other reasons), resigned and recommended his friend John Macy as his successor. Mayor Lunn reserved a place for Helen on the Board of Welfare and got a letter from Eugene Debs commending him for it. He had earlier announced that he was "as red as Debs."

The Macys had for a long time been hoping to move away from Wrentham. Life there had become too complicated. The automobile had made the village too easy to reach, and Helen's correspondence had grown to the point where it was an avalanche threatening to overwhelm anyone who came near it. Mrs. Macy had brought in a Lithuanian peasant from the fields, Ian Bittman, and trained him to cook and keep house, but Lithuanian peasants cannot read Braille or write letters to State Commissions for the Blind, and though reporters called Ian the politest man in the world, there was a limit to what he could do for them. As early as 1909 Mr. Macy had gone so far as to buy a house in Brunswick, Maine, overlooking Casco Bay, but the plan to occupy it never materialized. Helen was busy all of the time, but most of what she did was unremunerative, and the pinch of financial pressure in the household was serious and painful. Some of her friends tried to relieve this in 1910 by

approaching Mr. Andrew Carnegie. He immediately offered her a pension, but Helen bravely refused. She had given up the idea of supporting herself by writing, but she had another plan.

In all of her contact with the world she had felt that her greatest handicap was neither her blindness nor her deafness but her lack of a natural speaking voice. No especial work had been done with her articulation since she left the Wright-Humason Oral School beyond the daily practice with the help of her teacher. She had almost reconciled herself to getting along with what she had, until 1909, when she met a singing teacher of the Boston Conservatory of Music, Mr. Charles White, who expressed an interest in her voice and said that he would like to see what he could do with it. Hope sprang to life once more, and late in 1910 she began to study singing with him, not to learn to sing, but to develop her vocal cords so that she could be heard in a lecture hall or auditorium. If she could do this she might be able to make a living for herself and her teacher by lecturing to the public.

It was in the midst of this work that the offer from Mayor Lunn came, and for a time there was talk of moving to Schenectady. They were held back by several reasons. In the first place, the Socialist victory had not been complete—five out of the thirteen members of the Common Council were Democrats or Republicans—and no one knew how the experiment would work out. It was a small part-Socialist administration in the midst of a great capitalist society, and, as Mr. Macy said afterwards, such an organization "is like a bonfire on an iceberg: the brighter it burns the more quickly it releases the element that extinguishes it." This one burned feebly and lasted briefly, but it was not only the uncertainty of its success that kept Mrs. Macy and Helen in Wrentham.

For one thing, they felt that it would be good for Mr. Macy to be away from them a while. They did not consider themselves the two easiest women in the world to live with, and Mrs. Macy was not well. Fretting over their financial condition and their

domestic complications, worrying over household affairs, and working continuously (and she sometimes felt hopelessly) with Helen's voice had worn her down; and in addition there was an obscure malady, undiscovered for several years, which was sapping her strength. The doctors told her that she needed relaxation, and while there was not much chance of finding it in Wrentham there was still less of finding it in the midst of experimental politics in Schenectady. Helen was doing very well with her lessons and was reluctant to interrupt them. Mr. White had learned the manual alphabet and was working with her as he would have worked with any other pupil. He was coming to Wrentham three times a week (without pay) and felt that he and Helen were on their way to accomplishing something that would redound to the credit of both of them. Helen felt that the whole future depended upon her success. She saw no other way to financial independence for herself and her teacher except through a pension or charity.

It was imperative by this time for Mrs. Macy to have rest, and one of their few friends who ever gave a thought to her as well as to Helen tried to provide it for her. This friend, who to the end of her life was devoted to Mrs. Macy, was Mrs. William Thaw, mother of Harry Thaw who shot Stanford White. In the midst of her grave anxieties about her son, who at the moment was in Matteawan, she never failed to keep in touch with the household in Wrentham. She had in many ways made life more pleasant for them. She was even now in New York City busy with efforts in Harry's behalf, but she took time to invite Mrs. Macy and Helen and the Whites to spend the summer in a cottage of hers at Cresson, in the Alleghanies, near Pittsburgh. Mrs. Macy would have no household cares, Mrs. White could entertain herself as she wished, and Helen and Mr. White could go on with the lessons. They set out for Cresson, all four of them, but were hardly settled before Mr. White was urgently called back to Boston. Business matters made it impossible for him to return to Cresson. Helen and her teacher therefore went back

to Wrentham, and the lessons continued without interruption throughout the summer.

Helen spoke twice this year, once in Providence before the members of the Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, and later in Boston, before the International Otological Congress, but neither appearance was a real test of what she could do, for they were both before professional teachers who were already interested and not before the general public whose interest must be won and kept.

In September the underlying cause of Mrs. Macy's illness was discovered, and she was carried to St. Vincent's Hospital in Brookline for a major operation, the only serious operation she has ever had that was not on her eyes. Mr. Macy resigned his position in Schenectady and came back to Wrentham, while a homesick and worried Helen was packed off to Washington to stay indefinitely with Lenore Smith, carrying with her the memory of her teacher's fingers, too weak to form the words she wished to say, as another might have carried the memory of a voice too weak to summon strength to shape itself into articulate words. It was by no means certain that Mrs. Macy would live.

Helen went away acutely conscious of herself as a burden, and her presence in an unfamiliar house made her increasingly aware of it. Mrs. Smith, who is a sensitive and understanding woman, did everything that human power could to lift the weight from her mind. She was in the midst of getting her house ready for the winter, but Helen wrote: "No matter how great the confusion may be, she runs in just to let me know 'what's up,' and I haven't asked her a single question either. Indeed, I am studying how not to bother her. But alas! the more I do that, the more I seem to get in people's way. I am a perpetual stumbling block, a handicap, a hindrance, a hanger-on . . . a disturber of peace, an upsetter of plans, 'a tremendous burden.' . . ."

She begged again and again for news: "Do tell me promptly,

both of you, ANYTHING that happens to you. I can't rest easy or come home well or live through another such experience as this if you don't."

But as the news from Wrentham became more cheerful, her naturally buoyant temperament began to assert itself, and she managed to enjoy herself. She borrowed some books in Braille from the Library of Congress, among them *Anne of Green Gables*, which Mark Twain had recommended. She rode in Rock Creek Park and visited the Arlington National Cemetery, the McLean estate, and the Carnegie laboratories. She talked with Miss Margaret Macmillan, the distinguished British worker for the welfare of children, and was touched by Miss Macmillan's praise of her teacher, who, she said, had been an inspiration to her.

She returned to Wrentham in less than a month and found Mrs. Macy much improved but weak. The doctors had told her that she must be careful for at least a year. In the face of this she and Helen at once resumed the voice work, and less than four months later made their first public lecture in Montclair, N. J.

Helen went on the platform in a chill of stage fright, talked for a while on the right use of the senses, and came off in tears, feeling that the performance could not have been worse. But, to her surprise, she found the audience kind and enthusiastic. Thus encouraged, she made a number of other engagements for that spring.

She found that people knew her wherever she went, but the hotels and the unfamiliar houses were trying. She missed the paths around Wrentham and the freedom she had enjoyed as she walked along them. In a strange place she is indeed a stranger, and whatever move she makes has to be made with the help of a guide. She is almost totally without the remarkable sense of direction and distance which is so pronounced in some of the deaf blind; even in her own home she orients herself by contact with the furniture, and in a place where she does not

know the furniture pattern she is lost. Few people realize how much has to be done for her in this respect or how heavily it weighs upon her that it should be true.

She carried her big Braille books in her suitcase, but there were many times when she could not get at them. She had with her a pack of cards marked with Braille dots so that she could play solitaire, but it was not always easy to get a table, and there were long hours when she had nothing to do but sit alone and wait. When she put her own belongings away, and when she knew where someone else had put them, she could find them; but if her Braille writer, for example, was moved from the place where she expected to find it, she had to feel all over the room for it. It can take a blind person several hours to examine a room and at the end of the time he has no guarantee that he has covered every corner of it. Mrs. Macy was always careful never to move an object without letting her know, but casual friends who came in had a way of moving things from one part of the room to another for their own convenience without realizing that, so far as Helen was concerned, they might as well have spent the time pitching them out of the window. For Helen this was the worst of it—the helplessness, the aloneness.

Mrs. Macy was disconcerted to find that she was not as strong as she had been, and even more disconcerted to find that her eyes were not equal to looking after the business details of the lecture tours. She could no longer with any degree of certainty depend upon them to guide her through the intricacies of a strange city, but she hoped to be able to manage with the help of porters and taxicab drivers, policemen, and hotel keepers.

The inevitable crisis came in April, 1913, when they were lecturing in Bath, Me. The weather turned suddenly cold, and Mrs. Macy went to bed with influenza. Helen was terrified. Her deafness made it impossible for her to use a telephone; her blindness made it impossible for her to find the way downstairs; and her grotesque voice made it impossible for her to explain

to the attendants who came to the door. Mrs. Macy finally summoned the doctor, and a few days later, with the help of the hotel manager, they got on the train and went home. A week later Helen wrote Mr. Carnegie that she was ready to accept his aid. It was humiliating, but she saw no other way out.

They tried then to get someone to help them. It was easy to find any number of people who felt a sort of religious glow at the idea of serving Helen, but they could not find anyone in whom they could keep the glow alive. It was not that the attitude of worship towards Helen lessened, but these newcomers found that they could not keep up with the furious pace which Helen and her teacher set for themselves. These two intrepid women could survive train schedules which kept them riding all night in day coaches and delivered them early the next morning with the milk; they could survive dreadful food, verminous hotels, inquisitive reporters, tiresome photographers, and curious crowds, and go on with the lectures as if nothing out the way had happened, but they could not find anyone else who could do it.

In May Mr. Macy sailed for Europe.

In autumn Mrs. Macy and Helen began a regular series of lectures in various Eastern cities under the management of the Pond Lecture Bureau. They were wonderfully successful; Mr. Pond admitted that Helen was one of his best drawing cards. She found nearly everyone eager to help her. The first time she spoke in Washington she was introduced to the audience by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell; in New Haven, Conn., Ex-President William Howard Taft presided; and it was in connection with her lectures that she met Thomas A. Edison, Henry Ford, Judge Ben Lindsay, Enrico Caruso, and many others. Nearly everywhere she went she received an ovation.

From a letter of Mrs. Macy's to John Macy, October 8, 1913:

We had a real Southern audience at Winston-Salem. Two or three hundred ladies, soft-voiced, charming, hospitable, intensely South-

ern, and utterly ignorant of everything that counts in the world today. The hall was packed and I believe everyone understood what Helen said. There were two hundred and fifty young girls seated on the platform—a lovely background of colour and commotion. They presented Helen with huge bunches of magnolias, and she did look beautiful as she stood there in a soft radiance surrounded by those lovely girls and carrying the great armful of dark green foliage and white blossoms. I have never seen her look lovelier. . . .

There is a Negro school in Winston-Salem, a pitifully poor school struggling heroically for existence under the direction of a fine intelligent Negro named Atkins. They were anxious to hear us but of course were not permitted to come to the white people's College Hall. When we heard of their great disappointment we decided to visit their school to give them a chance to hear and see us. It was a most interesting experience, touching beyond words. Helen spoke beautifully and when one of the girls asked if she knew anything about coloured people she replied, "Indeed I do. They nursed me and cared for me in my childhood and guided my groping feet. I loved my kind nurse then and I love you now." Nearly everyone wept.

In January, 1914, they set out on the first of their many tours across the continent. Mrs. Keller went with them to look after railroad tickets, hotel reservations, to help with the shopping and with the various callers, and to try in every way to protect Mrs. Macy and Helen from futile, exhausting activities. She found it hard, but she enjoyed it. She loved the opulence of the great West, the trees and flowers and sunshine. She said afterwards to Helen that the years she spent travelling with them were the happiest as well as the most arduous she had ever known.

I thought we were going on a lecture tour [Helen wrote Mr. Macy after they had been out a few weeks], but now we seem bound for Vanity Fair. While we were in Canada, everyone said we were "wonderful, fascinating, charming and beautiful women." I was "the great pupil," Teacher was "the great teacher," and mother was "the great mother." Flowers, compliments, honours, and salvos were showered upon us wherever we went, and nothing was talked about but us three celebrities.

Really, our audiences were so enthusiastic and warm-hearted, they almost killed us with their love. After each lecture they gave us a royal reception. In Ottawa we spoke for the blind, and in Toronto for the high school, and in London for the Froebel Society. The Society met us at the station, and after the lecture we had refreshments with them in their rooms. They also saw us off when we left London, and they sent us on our way with home-made candies and flowers. Altogether, we had quite a royal progress in Canada.

In other letters Helen speaks of her efforts to "catch that baffling, heartbreaking, brain-racking will-o'-the-wisp of natural speech." Her voice was far from what she had hoped to make it. It is doubtful if their audiences would have come to see Mrs. Macy alone. It was always Helen, Helen, Helen they wanted to see. But as the months went by Mrs. Macy's part on the programme became increasingly important. She found that to those who were unfamiliar with the guttural, monotonous voice of the deaf, Helen had to be explained. After Helen spoke, what she said had to be interpreted. Mrs. Macy acted as interpreter, repeating the words sentence by sentence as Helen pronounced them. For about twenty minutes Helen could magnetize an audience, but after that the strain of listening and trying to follow was too great. Attention wandered. This meant that Mrs. Macy, in point of time, filled the larger part of the programme.

When she talked, she talked of Helen, of course, but she spoke also of education in its larger aspects. She stood before them as one of the great modern pioneers, a fact which is sometimes forgotten, since so many of the ideas which she advanced and practised are accepted now as commonplace. But it must be remembered that her work with Helen was done some years before Montessori began her work with defective children in Italy and proved her theories by teaching them so skilfully that they could compete in the regular schools with normal children. It was not until after the work with Helen was well under way that Montessori said that the children in the ordinary schools

were like rows of butterflies transfixed with pins, that they were not disciplined but annihilated. "I have been called a pioneer," the great Italian said when she met Mrs. Macy in 1915 at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, "but there," and she indicated the teacher of Helen Keller, "is your pioneer." Three years earlier, in writing the preface to her handbook which was published in 1912 in this country by the Frederick A. Stokes Company she began:

> If a preface is a light which should serve to illumine the contents of a volume, I choose, not words, but human figures to illustrate this little book, intended to enter families where children are growing up. I therefore recall here, as an eloquent symbol, Helen Keller and Mrs. Anne Sullivan Macy, who are, by their example, both teachers to myself and, before the world, living documents of the miracle in education.
>
> In fact, Helen Keller is a marvellous example of the phenomenon common to all human beings—the possibility of the liberation of the imprisoned spirit of man by the education of the senses. Here lies the basis of the method of education. . . .

The audiences granted without argument that Mrs. Macy had been successful with Helen and Dr. Montessori with defectives, but they did not admit that the same method might be equally successful with normal children. It would spoil them.

To this Mrs. Macy replied that her observation had taught her that it was very difficult to spoil a child. The best way to do it was to try through artificial education to shape him to fit a mould for which he was not intended. She had two fundamental principles. One was freedom—"freedom is the only safe condition for human beings." The other was discipline—

> . . . for freedom does not mean that he should be allowed to grow like a weed or a barbarian. Nothing worth while is ever got without effort. I am thoroughly convinced that the child must not have forced upon him things he is not interested in because he is not ready for them. I am equally certain that learning must not be merely haphazard play. He must not nibble the sweets and leave out the

substance. His nuts must not be cracked for him. There must be coherence, and an effective process of sitmulating his pleasure in a given subject until he has gained the mental discipline necessary to pursue it further. Joyous freedom must be wedded to accuracy and clear understanding, through which come self-criticism and self-control. The teacher must not let him scatter his efforts, his will, and his curiosity by studying in a careless, inattentive manner. *The true function of the teacher is to keep him interested.*

Mrs. Macy told them that Helen had had to work hard for everything she ever got and said that she had never in any sense considered her a genius. This is a word that she does not use lightly, and while it has been employed many times to describe herself and Helen separately and together, she has never thought it applicable to either one of them. But the statement caused so much indignation in the audience that she finally omitted it. The achievement was the same, no greater and no less, no matter by what name it was called.

The public had by this time decided that Helen belonged to them, and they took it upon themselves to advise her even in such small matters as her dress. If she appeared in cerise, which is very becoming, someone was sure to come to her afterwards and tell her that she should wear only white. They wanted nothing to disturb the angelic picture they carried in their minds.

In her letters Helen spoke repeatedly of Mrs. Macy's ill health. Three months after the tour began she wrote Mr. Macy from Vancouver:

> We have now killed over a hundred lectures and many other bugbears besides, and survived. I really wonder that Teacher is able to go on. She is very, very tired, though she will NOT admit it. At times she trembles so much that we marvel when she gets through the lecture and nothing happens.

In May Mrs. Macy fell down the steps leading to the studio of a photographer in Buffalo and chipped off the point of her elbow. The injury was painful, for the X-rays did not disclose

the fracture, and it was neglected for some weeks, but it was not serious except as an indication of the condition of her eyes. She was apt to stumble now if she was not guided. Besides this, her blood pressure was high, she had been troubled with colds, and had a slight but annoying cough.

Mrs. Keller brought them back to Wrentham and stayed long enough to get them settled—the elbow was not patched up until after their return—before she went to Montgomery, where she made her home with Helen's sister Mildred. She had come to carry them through an emergency and could not be with them always. Yet they planned to continue the lectures. Mr. Pond said that he did not think the war would interfere with their programme. It was already beginning to interfere with their peace of mind, but war or no war, they could not go on unless they could find someone to go with them.

In this search they ran into an extraordinary piece of good luck in the fall of 1914 in the person of Miss Polly Thomson, who came to them on October 29th and has been with them ever since. She was a young woman from Scotland seeking a foothold in America. She had not heard of Helen and knew nothing of the manual alphabet or the needs of the blind and the deaf, but she was eager and quick to learn. She was as strong as the granite hills of her native country and had strength of character to match this splendid physique. She had deep emotional capacity with the emotions under steady control. She was not in any sense literary, no slight advantage in an already too literary household, but she could balance a bank account (no one at Wrentham had ever been able to do this) and she could read a time-table without the help of a ticket agent. She could map out a vigorous cross-crountry schedule and keep it. She could manage a household, doing the cooking herself if it was necessary, and yet be the most gracious of hostesses. And she could stand a firm and uncompromising guard over a door bell or a telephone, which was something else no one at Wrentham had ever been able to do. She learned

to lead Helen and her teacher through the spasms of traffic without asking favours of policemen, learned to fit herself in with their plans and ambitions. When there was no money, she was willing to work without money. She came to the two women at a time when they needed her, and as the years have passed the need has deepened. She is to-day the right hand of the household; ears for Helen and eyes for both of them, an absolute necessity for their health and comfort and happiness. For more than forty years the friends of Mrs. Macy and Helen have wondered what they would do without each other. Now they wonder what either one of them would do without Polly Thomson.

A few weeks before Miss Thomson came Helen wrote Mr. White:

> We still meet people on our tours who say that my voice is improving, and I find it easier to talk with strangers even above the noise of a crowded hall or a train. But, I hardly need tell you, my voice has not brought the happiness that I anticipated. It is true, it has brought money and some measure of freedom from financial worries, but our hearts are as empty as last year's nest. It is like a banquet with costly viands, wines, fruits, and—no guests.

This last was a reference to Mr. Macy. He was leaving them. Both women knew that he would never come back.

Late in the autumn they set out across the continent on another lecture tour.

CHAPTER XVIII

Fortunate Isle

MISS THOMSON came to Wrentham about four months after the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand at Serajevo. The World War was already under way. Germany and Austria-Hungary were fighting Russia, France, Great Britain, Serbia, Montenegro, and Belgium. There were ominous rumblings throughout the rest of the world, but the lectures were carried on, as before, with regularity and success until Mrs. Macy and Helen reached the point where they felt that they must throw themselves into action for the cause in which they believed. As Socialists they stood for peace, and as Socialists they had been gravely disappointed. It had been the hope of the more ardent members of the group when the war began that the Socialists in the various belligerent countries would refuse to fight and thus bring an end to hostilities, but the Socialists everywhere, with a few notable exceptions, some of whom were shot, turned National.

The interest of the two women in disarmament antedated by many years their interest in the Socialist party. As early as 1899, after Aguinaldo had issued his proclamation of war against the United States, Helen had told a reporter that she did not believe in war except for liberty and added that her sympathies were with the Filipino. When he asked her if it was not her hope that America would be the first nation to lay down arms she replied, "Yes, I hope so, but I do not think it will. We are only just beginning to fight now, and I am afraid we like it. I think it will be one of the old, experienced nations that has had enough of war."

On April 22, 1900, she wrote Mr. Hitz from Cambridge:

> It is hard, very hard to realize that, in the midst of the universal gladness of nature, poor South Africa is groaning under war's cruel scourge. How is it possible that, while we see nothing but peace and beauty, a death-grapple should be at this moment going on between two brave nations? My sympathies are intensely pro-Boer; but I speak of this only to show you how much I am impressed by the stupendous contrasts of human life.

It had always been their custom to allow the audience to ask Helen questions when she was on the platform. Most of the inquiries were harmless enough, like "Do you close your eyes when you sleep?" "What is your idea of colour?" "How was it possible for you to learn Greek?" "Can you tell the time of day without a watch?" "What do you consider the most important event in your life?" etc. Once or twice, in cities where the labour problem was acute, she had been asked before the lecture not to refer to social problems from the platform, but by 1915 it was impossible to avoid such questions. Helen and her teacher welcomed the fight.

The crusade for woman suffrage was racing along at white heat, and Helen was in the middle of it. In this she was ably abetted by her mother and severely left alone by her teacher. Late in 1915 the New York *Times* stated editorially that "for a long time to come a constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote will be a forlorn hope," but Helen believed it might not be such a forlorn hope as the learned gentleman thought. Like many other women, she had at that time great confidence in the ballot (a confidence which Mrs. Macy never shared), and it was her belief that once the women had this weapon in their hands they could not but use it in the cause of peace. She welcomed opportunities to declare herself in favour of it. She gloried in placing herself on the side of the workers, against the capitalist and the militarist. She could see mankind rushing towards a God-promised future, "And lo," she wrote to her mother, "we are part of it—the terror, the

glory, the final triumph over the misery that has so long lain a curse upon the earth."

In November, 1915, she received a telegram from Mr. Henry Ford inviting her to accompany him on the peace mission of the *Oscar II.* She could not go because of the lecture contracts, and probably would not have gone even if she had been free. She wished as much as anyone else to "get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas," but she did not think the *Oscar II* could do it. But she never made fun of the peace ship. She was too sincerely interested in peace ever to deride any other honest worker for the cause.

A few weeks later it was widely announced in the New York papers that on December 19th Helen was to discuss Henry Ford and his peace project before the Labour Forum at the Washington Irving High School. It was further stated that she would advocate the general strike as the quickest way to end the European conflict. This brought forth a howl of protest.

> We submit [stated the New York *Sun*] that such a meeting under the auspices of a serious and presumably responsible organization, held in one of the most conspicuous public schools of the City of New York, addressed by a person whose opinions as based upon any inclusive knowledge of the facts cannot possibly be considered of any value whatever—is not an edifying performance. We are surprised that the managers of the Labour Forum and the Board of Education should have lent their sanction to such a project.

More than two thousand people came to hear Helen that night. She was cheered to the echo when she asked the workingmen not to join the army that Congress was about to organize; the army was out to defend the capitalist; if the workingmen would unite they could not only stop the war but could win industrial freedom for themselves.

> I look upon the world as my fatherland [she said], and every war has for me the horror of a family feud. I hold true patriotism to be the brotherhood and mutual service of all men. The preparedness I believe in is right thinking, efficiency, knowledge, and courage to

follow the highest ideals. When true history replaces the lies and false teachings of the schools, the true call of patriotism will be a call to brotherhood and not to arms.

She was interrupted twice. One person wished to know how she could tell when she was applauded, and another wished to know how she knew that the present industrial system was unjust as she pictured it. To the first she replied patiently that she knew by the vibrations; to the second, that she knew by knowing how the workers lived. A resolution was passed to send copies of the speech to President Wilson and the members of Congress. Incidentally the *Times* reporter remarked that her enunciation had improved markedly in the past few years. Mrs. Macy interpreted her, as usual, but the reporter said that it was not difficult to follow her by watching her face closely. When Helen came outside she found a mob waiting for her. Police reserves were called out to keep it in order while she made another speech on the sidewalk. When this was over she was swept off her feet and carried to her waiting automobile.

Nobody can have the heart to criticize poor little Helen Keller [said the New York *Herald* the following morning (Helen was thirty-five years old and had never been little)] for talking when opportunity offers. Talking is to her a newly discovered art, and it matters not if she does talk of things concerning which she knows nothing, could not possibly know anything.

But why should the so-called Labour Forum be permitted to use the pathos of her personality to promote a propaganda of disloyalty and anarchy?

And what right has the Board of Education to turn over one of this city's school buildings for the purposes of such propaganda?

The Brooklyn *Eagle* declared that her delivery as a lecturer had been greatly overstated, her ability as a thinker vastly overrated. Other dailies were equally caustic.

On January 6, 1916, Helen made a speech at Carnegie Hall on "The Workers and Preparedness." Those who heard it greeted it with the same fervour that had characterized the

meeting at the Washington Irving High School, but the press comments on this, on the articles she was writing for the New York *Call* (Socialist) and on her general attitude towards everything were biting.

> Perhaps as a blind leader of the blind [*Life* said], Helen belonged with Henry's crew. Peace-making is a blind business; so is war-making. Henry and Helen are two very kind hearts, imperfectly equipped to see the whole of life.

And again from the same source:

> Our good Henry Ford . . . does not know enough to hinder him from doing anything that he thinks of. It is much the same with Helen Keller and her unqualified social and political assertions. She knows enough to make them, but not enough to qualify them. She lives in an imagined world, and so, considerably, does Henry.
>
> There is a charm of other-worldliness about both of them. . . . Neither of them has worldly wisdom enough to baulk at anything that looks like the leading of the spirit.

It was not surprising to find the names of Henry Ford and Helen Keller linked together in those days, but *Life* unexpectedly coupled with them that of Theodore Roosevelt.

> Theodore [so the article ran on] has some of the same sort of charm. If a thing looks good to him he does it. He hates to let an impulse die unacted, especially if it is a gallant impulse. We ought all to be like that, because gallant impulses are precious, but most of us get broken of acting on them because the world is so full of hard or stupid objects that one hits whenever he skips the beaten path. We get cowed into discretion. It is nasty; the main justification of it being that persons actuated by gallant impulses are apt to collide not only with dolts and posts, but (very much) with one another, whereas, even on the beaten path, you get somewhere if you keep moving.

None of these three got very far. Mr. Ford returned to New York City from the peace expedition on January 2, 1916, the laughing stock of the world. Colonel Roosevelt tried in vain to persuade the United States to go at once into the war, and

Helen tried in vain to keep us out of it entirely. In the summer which followed the addresses in New York she and Mrs. Macy undertook an anti-preparedness lecture tour on a Chautauqua circuit while Polly went to Scotland for a visit to her family. A young newspaper man whom Mr. Macy recommended went with them to do the work that Polly had been doing. Like Helen and her teacher, he too was a zealous advocate of disarmament, but the tour was a complete and ignominious failure. The country was gathering itself for war; it wished to hear nothing of peace. It would have been pleasant if Helen had told them how she was able to enjoy the pretty birds and the lovely music and the sweet flowers, but Helen couldn't talk about such things any longer. Her waking mind was concentrated upon the war; and when she slept she was tortured by horrible dreams of carnage on the battlefield. Mrs. Macy was thoroughly in sympathy with Helen and distressed at the way the war was affecting her. After a few discouraging weeks they returned home, heartsick and lonely. Polly returned soon afterwards.

Mrs. Macy was very ill by this time, and the symptoms were alarming. The slight cough had taken on heroic proportions, and there was a darting pain in her side. She developed pleurisy, and Mrs. Keller had to come North to look after Helen. The doctor in Wrentham told Mrs. Macy that she must go at once to the Adirondacks. She left for Lake Placid with Polly on the twentieth of November.

I don't know how I stood the pain of having you go last night [Helen wrote the following morning]. As we walked to the car I felt suddenly overwhelmed with loneliness and nameless dread. It seemed as if some grim destiny would take you from me forever.

In the event of that grim destiny Helen had planned to run away with the young newspaper man who had accompanied them on the tour of the previous summer, but her plans were dashed to the ground when a meddlesome reporter dug up her signature from the marriage license bureau and the newspapers

published an announcement of the engagement. Of this sad little episode Helen has written in *Midstream.*

When her mother found it out there was nothing for Helen to do but to go home with her to Montgomery. Mrs. Keller had never liked the young man, but Helen continued to correspond with him for some months, in the meanwhile writing anxious letters to her unhappy teacher.

The doctors at Lake Placid confirmed the suspicions of the doctors in Wrentham. Mrs. Macy had tuberculosis; it was not encouraging to remember that her mother and her brother Jimmie had died of it. She was placed under strict orders to relax completely, to forget her worries, to enjoy the fresh cold air and stay out in it as much as possible. She was miserable. She hated cold weather almost as much as she hated the idea of tuberculosis. She was tired and sick. She had never lived under strict orders from anyone and had no intention of beginning at the age of fifty; her last birthday had been her fiftieth.

I am grieved [Helen wrote] to hear from Polly that you find it so depressing at Lake Placid. I don't wonder that you do, with such a trying combination of bad weather, medical bugbears, "elderly stodgy people," and loneliness, and the worn-out feeling you speak of. But wait a little, and the "splendid, silent sun" shall pour its sweet balm upon you. Then perhaps the still small voice in your heart will whisper a message of peace that you can hear amid the silent glory of the snow-robed mountains. And there is a chance of your spending Christmas here. We shall look for you, and look awfully hard.

Helen chattered on about a lecture she had attended on women in Turkey but a few days later:

Just think, this is the first Thanksgiving Day that we have been apart! This thought came over me when I awoke this morning, and my heart was like lead.

In a given set of circumstances it is nearly always possible for one intimate friend to predict with a fair degree of accuracy

what another will do, but this has never been true of Mrs. Macy. What her course of action will be even Helen has to guess, and as often as not the guess is wrong. Helen knew her well enough to know that she would not stay at Lake Placid unless her feelings towards the place changed, but Helen was as unprepared as anyone for what came next.

As Mrs. Macy remembered it afterwards, the cause of her downfall was a full-page spread in colour in the Sunday issue of the New York *Times*. As a matter of fact, it was a small black-and-white insert two or three inches wide, but it carried a tiny picture of a palm-fringed beach in Porto Rico; it painted in seductive words the glories of the climate there, "soft as June"; it offered romance; it promised escape. Vessels "especially built for tropical service" sailed every Saturday. Mrs. Macy's imagination supplied the colour. She did not wait to write for the booklet. She said, "Polly, we are going to Porto Rico." And she did not wait until Saturday.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

Polly and I sailed Wednesday aboard the S. S. *Carolina*. It was an eleven days' sail out of the snow, the piercing winds, and the leaden skies of the Adirondacks into the sunshine of the Southern seas. It seemed incredible, Helen! I had to pinch myself to see if I was awake or dreaming. There, beyond that narrow stretch of rippling, sun-warmed ocean, was Porto Rico, like a great ship afloat in violet waters!

. . . The island is a dream of loveliness, a perfect riot of colour, blooming trees, and shrubs, roses, clematis, tree-like lilies, poinsettias, and many beautiful flowers I never saw before; even the telegraph poles are festooned with a gorgeous parasite. But best of all, the climate is glorious, warm not hot; I mean it is not cruelly hot; there is always a delightful breeze from the ocean. The houses have no windows, and the natives wear almost nothing. Indeed, the little black children go naked. The houses are painted all colours of the rainbow, which gives a picturesque appearance to the streets. I cannot speak Spanish. Polly and I have great fun to make ourselves understood. No matter what we say they answer, "*Si*"; that means yes. They look bewildered when we shake our heads. The

sign language is our chief means of communication. But, language or no language, it is far pleasanter than Lake Placid. I simply hated that place—I could never have got well there. I am going to take a little shack in the hills and keep house. The camp, as we call it, has four rooms. Nothing else. It costs $15 a month. I will buy the necessities and manage as best we can. You know it will be some time before I shall be good for much, and I believe I can be happier here than any other place I can afford to go to. The shack is high, and is right in the middle of an orange and grapefruit grove with a pineapple patch in front.

During her life Mrs. Macy has written very few letters. One reason that she gives is that people would always rather have a letter from Helen than from her. Another which she does not mention is that she has found what she considers better services to which to devote the little sight that she has had left to her. But she did write regularly to Helen while she was in Porto Rico. The letters bear no dates. In the first place, she had no calendar and did not know or care what the date was, and, in the second place, she was pricking out the words with a Braille stiletto and finding the process slow and tedious. She had not used Braille for more than twenty years. Helen had to send her a copy of the alphabet. "You have no idea," she wrote Helen, "what a job it is for me, the stiletto is so awkward in my hand, it feels like trying to punch a hole in the universe with a toe!" But even so, such was her respect for language, the great miracle of human intercourse, that she could not debase it. She did not resort to distortions and short cuts, but pricked out full grammatical sentences.

Her first letters were in defense of her position, answers to the loving but energetic protests of her friends whose anxious missives followed her to the island as fast as trains and boats could get them there.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

Now I must say a last word about mother's prejudice against Porto Rico. I wonder that she can have such strong opinions of a place

she really doesn't know. I wish you could make her understand in a nice way that I intend to stay here until April. I'll march right into the lion's den rather than return to Placid. To paraphrase Emerson, the chambers of the "Club" are jails. John Bunyan went to jail rather than attend the parish church. George Fox went to jail rather than take off his hat in the presence of the magistrate, and I'll be martyred somehow before I'll return to the Adirondacks.

If all people knew what was good for them and acted accordingly, this world would be a very different world, though not nearly so interesting. But we don't know what's good for us, and I'm spending my days in experimenting. The experiments are amusing—and sometimes costly, but there's no other way of getting knowledge. . . .

I'm glad I didn't inherit the New England conscience. If I did, I should be worrying about the state of sin I am now enjoying in Porto Rico. One can't help being happy here, Helen—happy and idle and aimless and pagan—all the sins we are warned against. I go to bed every night soaked with sunshine and orange blossoms, and fall to sleep to the soporific sound of oxen munching banana leaves.

We sit on the porch every evening and watch the sunset melt from one vivid colour to another—rose, asphodel (Do you know what colour that is? I thought it was blue, but I have learned that it is golden yellow, the colour of Scotch broom) to violet, then deep purple. Polly and I hold our breath as the stars come out in the sky—they hang low in the heavens like lamps of many colours—and myriads of fireflies come out on the grass and twinkle in the dark trees!

Did you know that in tropical skies the stars appear much larger and nearer to the earth than farther north? I didn't know it myself. Neither Polly nor I have ever seen such stars! It is no exaggeration to say they are lamps—ruby, emerald, amethyst, sapphire! It seems to Polly and me, if we could climb to the bamboo roof of our new garage, we could touch them. We lie on our cots and gaze up at them—the shack has no windows, only shutters, and our view is unobstructed—we say over and over the names of stars we know, but that doesn't help us to identify these. Is that long, swinging curve the Pleiades? We are ashamed to be so ignorant. If we could get hold of a book on astronomy, how we should study it here!

Do you remember the big globe in the rotunda at "Perkins"? Well, the moon looks as large as that sometimes, and often it is girdled with pearls as large as oranges, like the metal circle the globe hangs in. And several times we have seen it lighted as by lightning.

The place has cast a spell over me. Something that has slept in me is awake and watchful. Disembarking at San Juan was like stepping upon my native heath after a long, distressful absence. I will tell you more of these strange experiences anon.

In nearly every letter Mrs. Macy begged Helen to bring her mother to Porto Rico; it was evident that she was happy there. It was the first, as it has been the last, totally carefree time she has ever had. There was no use in worrying, no use in doing anything but giving herself up to the enjoyment of her surroundings. Polly's letters indicated that she was far from well, and once in a while she herself complained of feeling old and tired. Helen was not reassured, and the famous optimism which had carried her through so many trials was not sufficient to offset the feeling of dread with which she contemplated the future.

Helen Keller to Mrs. Macy:

DEAREST TEACHER:

. . . I have one or two plain questions to ask you. If anything should happen to you suddenly, to whom would you wish me to turn for help in business matters? How could I best protect myself against anyone who might not be honest or reliable? Mother loves me with a deep, silent love; but in all probability she will not be with me constantly.

Another thing, if you should be taken from me, or be unable to attend to our affairs, what shall I do with all our papers? Whom could I trust to go over them with me? I hate to worry you with these questions; but I know enough to realize my dependence upon others, and I try to think, plan and consult you so that I may find the right person or persons to depend upon. Oh, Teacher, how alone and unprepared I often feel, especially when I wake in the night! Please don't think, however, that I let this problem weigh upon my mind more than I can help. The wonder is, I don't worry more. Look at Madame Galeron,[1] the deaf blind poet. She has had her gifted father, her husband, her grown-up daughter, several able friends to help her in emergencies, and here you and I are with nothing settled!

[1]A Frenchwoman whose father was a friend of Victor Hugo. Victor Hugo wrote a preface to her book of poems.

Won't you try to consider these problems calmly, while you listen to the wind rustling in the palms and breathe deeply the heavenly air you love, then write me what you think best. I need suggestions that you can make now while you are free and can think quietly.

How I long to be with you among the wild-flowers and the palms, in the bosom of the hills!

I am sick of four walls and a ceiling,
I have need of the sky,
I have business with the grass.

But hadn't we better wait and see how you feel before mother and I think of coming? You said it would be some time before you were good for much. I fear that if we came now, you would not have the rest and freedom you should have.

But I do think when you are better, we must start our life over again, reducing it to the simplest terms possible. (Of course the simple life doesn't exclude a few modern conveniences, or machinery that turns drudgery into joyous activity.) We can travel more as we like without lecturing, and we can see more of our friends! We can bring about this change anywhere—in Wrentham, or Porto Rico, or the Sandwich Islands. All we need is courage to do the sensible thing. Don't you dare tell me it's too late! You've just shown that you aren't yet old or fixed in your ways, you still have a heart to dare and to achieve. Only get well, let us try this scheme and work afresh, or have a life holiday, as the Fates may decree. I know it will work out right if we go at it right. . . .

This brought an immediate reply.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

You are never out of my thoughts. They keep me awake at night, and daylight brings no satisfactory answers to them. When I married John I thought I had solved the greatest of them. He promised me that in case of my death, which in the natural course would come before his,[1] he would be a brother to you, look after your happiness, and take charge of your affairs. For years my mind was at rest on this—to you and me—most important of matters. But ever since he left us I have worried. He seemed, and still seems, the only one to take care of you when I go. Perhaps, dear, it would be best all round

[1]Mr. Macy died suddenly, in Stroudsburg, Pa., Aug. 26, 1932.

to let him do what he can to make things a little easier for you when I am gone. He understands your business better than anyone else. And would it not be better in every way to let the suffering, the unhappiness, that has come to all three of us die with me? You still love John. I am sure you do love him. Such love as we have felt for John never dies altogether. For my own part, I think of him constantly; and since I have been ill much of the bitterness has gone from my thoughts of him. I wish you could forgive and forget too. You would be much happier, if you could, Helen. If that cannot be, why, I suppose you will have to depend upon lawyers to advise you in business matters. Mr. Raymond is, I think, a good man and would always do all in his power for you. I have often wished that you knew Phillips better. If you could write to him oftener you would soon get to feel nearer to him. I think he is a very fine boy, and if you would give him a chance he may prove a good friend as well as kind brother. Of course, dear, life will never be just the same again for any of us—it never is after these great changes—we cannot expect it. We can only try to be brave and patient for the sake of those who will have to live with us and take care of us. I am trying very hard to get well for your sake. . . .

Helen Keller to Mrs. Macy:

DEAREST TEACHER:

We have just had the most terrible excitement; but, thank God, everyone is safe and well. So don't be worried by the news in this letter.

A fire broke out in my room Monday night. Fortunately I wasn't asleep. At first I noticed a strange odour; but it was exactly like the odour of steam in the kitchen-pipe; so I paid no attention to it. Then came a light odour like smoke from out-of-doors. I had noticed it so frequently in our house and elsewhere, it didn't disturb me. But suddenly I smelt tar and burning wood. I sprang up, threw a window open and rushed to mother's room. She found a flame six feet high in my room and called Warren. Mildred telephoned to the fire department, and in an incredibly short time they arrived. I felt the men hacking away at the floor, we had gone down into Mildred's bedroom. A moment later we were all ordered out of the house. They said they couldn't tell where the fire would spread. So out we went bundled up in blankets and quilts, down the street to Grandma Tyson's. It was after one; we sat by the fire a while and tried to calm

down a little. Just as we were getting in bed, we got word that the fire was caused by a defective flue. It had started right under my bed! The firemen said that they had come just in time. Five or ten minutes more, and the house would have been demolished. . . .

It distresses me to think that my lack of sight might have proved fatal to my loved ones. It seems as if I could never sleep quietly here again without putting my face down close to the floor and hunting all over for an odour or a hidden spark.

When are you coming back to America, Teacher? I hate to have you so far away while we're on the verge of war, and those dread submarines are scouring the ocean for whatever they can destroy. . . .

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

DEAREST,

Your letter and mother's and Mildred's have come at last! I was so glad to get them I cried.

. . . My plan is to return home—alas! there is no home for us, but we shall find one, probably in New York—in April. First, I shall go to Saranac and have myself examined. Until then I shall enjoy myself here. . . .

Dear, I do want to get well for your sake. You do need me still. Your letters make me realize it more and more. This separation is teaching us both a number of things, is it not? What experiences you are having! The fire must have been a terrible shock to the nerves of the family! You poor child! It was awful, waiting in the dark and feeling those frantic sounds and not knowing what was going on. It's a wonder you aren't all in sanatoria.

Now for the secret. Harry[1] and the car have just arrived!!! Don't think I'm frightfully extravagant! They bring cars down here for very little, and the expense of keeping it isn't much. I have a garage made of bamboo brush. Harry will be a great comfort in many ways, and oh, how we shall enjoy the car here! We really needed it besides, as we had no means of getting anywhere, nor even of getting provisions except through the kindness of not very near neighbours. So come along, I will show you every nook and corner of my Paradise.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

. . . Helen, you must not worry about the future. I am not going to die yet—I know that I am going to get well. I don't feel ill a bit. In

[1]Harry Lamb, a chauffeur whom they had hired in Wrentham.

fact, if it weren't for that horrid laboratory report, I shouldn't know there was anything wrong with me.

But even if I should die, there is no reason why you should not go on with life. Somebody would help you with the reading, I am sure of that. If you quietly observe the life about you, and your life in particular, you will see that the future cannot possibly be as hopeless as the beginning seemed before I came to you. Besides, you believe in the loving watchfulness of a Heavenly Father. (I have not that consolation, but I am deeply glad that you have it.) There is always a way out of the most difficult situation if we really want to get out of it. The merciful Providence—or whatever power there is in the universe—has so ordained things that our little world will go on without us. Indeed, it will not miss us long.

It is a comfort to know that the waters close over us quickly. Only a few remember the splash and struggle, and fancy it was important, really. Was it James Russell Lowell who said, "I have lost the *Atlantic* (meaning the magazine) but my cow has calved, as if nothing had happened"?

I daresay we are making all this fuss for nothing. Cheer up, the worst is yet to come.

Helen was having a variety of small troubles in Montgomery. She had for a long time wished to read *God and the State*, by the Russian anarchist and "apostle of destruction," Mikhail Bakunin. His beliefs, she knew, were not hers. He was an atheist; she was a devout Swedenborgian. He advocated the complete destruction of the State; she advocated the establishment of a benevolent Socialist State. He thought political action worthless; and she still held to her faith in the ballot. But she was ready to listen to any programme which offered a way out of the world's distress. She sent a copy of the book to the National Institution for the Blind in London, asking them to transcribe it for her into Braille. The secretary-general returned it. She had no one with her who would read it to her.

Of innocuous books she had a plenty. Jean Webster's *Daddy-long-legs*, Chesterton's *The Innocence of Father Brown*, Kate Douglas Wiggin's *The Romance of a Christmas Card*, Alice Hegan Rice's *A Matter of Friendship*, some of Emerson's and some of

Crothers' essays, *The Pickwick Papers*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. All these were in Braille and entertaining enough, but sadly out of key with what she really wanted to read.

Late in 1916 Helen made over the proceeds of the German edition of *The Story of My Life* to the German soldiers who were blinded in the war.[1] In France this was hailed as a German artifice, and the people were warned not to believe it. A professor in one of the French schools wrote her that even if these German soldiers were not personally guilty of the atrocities that had been ascribed to them, the soldiers who had lost their sight in the defense of France were more worthy of her pity. When there was no doubt that Helen had given the money to the Germans the Paris *Matin* declared that she had been won over to the cause of that country, but this was patently absurd. She had given benefit lectures in Pittsburgh and elsewhere for the blinded soldiers in the British, French, and Belgian armies, and had written appeals in their behalf. The only reason that she had not given the royalty on the French edition of *The Story of My Life* to the French soldiers was that there was no French edition.

I am neutral, uncompromisingly neutral [she wrote]. I have never at any time espoused the cause of Germany or the cause of any of the belligerent nations. . . . I am opposed to all wars except those that are really fought for freedom. I do not object to war merely because it takes life. The French Revolution cost thousands of lives, and history has justified the French Revolution. I object to the kind of war Europe is fighting, and the kind of war America is getting ready to fight—a war for trade, and a place in the sun. It is France itself that has convinced me of its purpose. In one of the Braille papers for the blind from Paris, *La Revue Braille*, I read this: "We are fighting for our morals, our faith, our civilization. We shall fight until we conquer, we shall never turn back until WE are the first Military Nation in Europe. There is a consensus of opinion among the thinkers and literary men of France in this matter." I read these words many times before I could believe my fingers. Not a word of defense could

[1]It is interesting to note that in 1933, under the Hitler régime, Helen's books were burned in the public square in Berlin.

I find. It was an avowal of militarism, and militarism is Germany's unpardonable crime against humanity.

The Braille publications were among the last to be censored, and Helen for a long time had been getting items in raised print from both Germany and France that the vigilant authorities might not have allowed to go through if they had been able to read them.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

. . . Write as often as you can. I think some of our letters go astray. The war, or rumours of war, seem to have knocked the mails galley West. I know very little of what is going on. We seldom see a paper; and when we do it's two weeks old. So I don't know this minute whether we are at war with Germany or not. And, bless you, I don't seem to care greatly.

I think your letter to Professor—— is very good, but I did not send it. It is not always possible to know whether it is wise to explain one's position in such matters when the other person's point of view is the opposite of one's own, and when circumstances tend to make both parties extremely emotional. I can understand Professor ——'s point of view, although I can't sympathize with it.

You know, dear, you are an impassioned reformer by temperament. We both fight for peace like soldiers on a battlefield. How often have I said that we both make too much of a battlefield of life! Maybe there would be more peace in the world if we cultivated the gentler virtues. It is up to us who think we are in the right to try to be patient and tolerant towards everybody. God Himself cannot make this a kindlier world without us.

It is conceivable that Professor —— has his part in the plan of the Lord. The Good Samaritan couldn't have helped the wounded man without the ass.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

Thank you, dearest, for your lovely letter. I am glad you copied that poem "Homeward Bound" [by John Macy], I love it too. I read very little—nothing, in fact. Polly reads the papers when there are any to read, and we are reading Jack London's *The Call of the Wild.* It is very absorbing and heartbreaking.

What do you think of this definition? Poetry is the exquisite fusion of image and emotion in words. It came to me when I read "Homeward Bound."

Yes, it is true that most people you meet in Montgomery lack individuality. It is equally true of most places. Individuality is not encouraged in the United States. I have read that the French delight in it, even in eccentricity. But our people do not like to excite remark because of their ideas. I remember that in school it was the commonplace, docile girls who were the favourites with the teachers.

I am glad you are reading poetry to put your mind in tune. It is a delightful mental exercise to strip off the leaves of a poet's thoughts, expose the fruit to the sun of our own spirits and observe how the flavour is changed by its rays. It is fascinating to watch how the blossoms and fruits of his mind take on different hues, odours and savours when transplanted to another brain.

The game of words is the only game you can play on equal terms with the best of them. Don't get impatient because the game is slow. Remember, the great writers often practise for days before the right phrase or image comes to them.

I am sorry, dear, that you find it so difficult to write the suffrage article. I should think it would be rather good fun. It is too bad that writing should come so hard with you, especially when it is your only medium of self-expression. I sympathize with you, writing is "a lonely, dreary business" if you don't love to play with words. But is there any other way that you can reach the mind and heart of the public? You are interested in the questions of the day and the handicapped. You desire to serve mankind. How can you do that, except by writing? It would be wonderful if we could put forth thoughts as a tree puts forth buds, leaves and fruit, without effort, but it just doesn't happen that way.

It is a cause of regret, of course, that Wilson has not expanded with the expansion of the world. But has the world about him expanded? It seems to be a fact that some minds cannot assimilate anything that is not very personal to themselves. They grow old, and imagine their maturity is wisdom.

I am not influenced in the least by Upton Sinclair's faith in President Wilson. Sinclair is one of those parlour Socialists that Joe Ettor despises. He would be just the one to be caught by Wilson's verbiage. No, no! Wilson is not a great humanist. All his words and acts are controlled by a fixed idea. I am not clear as to just what the idea is, but it will be disclosed as events unfold. One thing is certain, every-

thing he does will be for the world's supreme good. Exploitation is always benevolent—it is the Christian pose. I am afraid nothing short of a revelation from above could open my mind and heart to see anything approaching altruism in President Wilson's deeds and many words. I guess I'm one of those people who can't expand.

I am feeling fine these days.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

Of course you can't shut out of your mind the horror of this awful war. There is nothing we can do about it but wait. I think we shall jump into it before many months. I don't see what good that will do, but we, as individuals, have done all we can to keep America out of the maelstrom. Don't hesitate to write me all that is in your mind. I know you can't talk to your family as you really feel. There is no better way to ease off the appalling sense of catastrophe than to share one's griefs and fears with another who has one's confidence.

Yes, it is unthinkable that anything so infamous should happen in the age we have been living in and calling enlightened and civilized. You can understand now why Bill Haywood derided the idea that any country is civilized. I remember his saying that our high refinement was a thin veneer concealing liars, swindlers, and murderers. I thought at the time that he was talking rather wildly, but now the abominations of this war make his statements appear mild.

You know, I never have trusted President Wilson. He is an egotist, a tyrant at heart who wants to be Bismarck without Bismarck's intelligence. When the bankers get nervous about their loans, they will force him to enter the war. But you know, Helen, that in history we have found the worst things, the most dreadful disasters served as stepping-stones to a new epoch. The blight and ruin and horror of the French Revolution were necessary to awaken abject peoples to a sense of their human rights. Who knows? This war may topple to earth the brutal stupidities and uglinesses of this huge, materialized plutocracy. The waste of capital may be so prodigious that capitalism will not be able to rise again. The sacrifice will be beyond calculation, but perhaps the benefits will also be enormous. Oh, dear, what a dismal letter this is! and oh, how out of key it is with my surroundings!

The sun is flinging shafts of gold across the floor. The air is sweet with the scent of orange blossoms, and the ground is aflame with the long, ribbon-like pineapple leaves. From the verandah it looks like a

Persian rug, only more brilliant, and not at all inviting to stretch out on. The pineapple is lovely to look at, but it is as comfortable to the touch as—a hedgehog. If I had a grain of the sense of the hummingbirds that are circling around the banana-tree like a string of fire-opals, I shouldn't have wasted so much time and so many punches on reflections about war. Aren't we foolish to fill our minds with the deviltries of men instead of with the beauties of nature? But we must help each other all we can, and we must try to keep sane, all the more if we believe the world has gone mad.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

It pains me deeply, Helen, not to be able to believe as you do. It hurts not to share the religious part of your life. To me, as you well know, this life is the important thing. What we do Now and Here matters much because our acts affect other human beings.

I am fond of the Bible as poetry. I find beauty and delight in it, but I do not believe it was any more inspired by God than all fine writing is—inspired. The future is dark to me. I believe that love is eternal, and that it will eternally manifest itself in life. I use the word eternal in the sense that it is as far as my imagination can reach.

With you the belief in a future where the crooked places will be made straight is instinctive. Faith in conscious immortality helps you to find life worth living despite your limitations and difficulties. The idea of living forever in some place called Heaven does not appeal to me. I am content that death should be final, except as we live in the memory of others.

Harry Lake brought two Americans to call on us. We talked about the American occupation of the island. The men insisted that the island was better off than when it belonged to Spain. Over and over again they expressed surprise that the natives did not appreciate what we were doing for them. We Americans can't seem to understand that when burglars break into a house, the family can't regard the intrusion as a friendly act, even if the burglars take only a little of what belongs to them. . . .

The weather is divine! I don't know what Warren's cousin means by "enervating climate." To me the climate is perfect. I don't know whether the mornings or the evenings are most beautiful.

For once in her life it was not Helen who was dependent upon Mrs. Macy for news of the outside world, but Mrs. Macy who

was dependent upon Helen. Most of what she heard of what was going on during her four months in Porto Rico she heard through Helen:

Helen Keller to Mrs. Macy:

March 1, 1917.

. . . Have you read the report that, in the extremity, and after all peace efforts have failed, Henry Ford has offered his plant at Detroit for the Government to use in any way it sees fit? He has also offered his services and the loan to the government, without interest, of a hundred million dollars, if it is necessary. There were several articles about him by John Reed reprinted in the *Ziegler*.[1] They made me feel more than ever the greatness of my privilege in knowing the miracle worker of American industry.

We are being blockaded according to the latest bulletins; but I can't get excited over it. I can't see the difference between a German and a British blockade, except that one is under the sea and the other on top. I feel that we shall not actually go to war for some time. President Wilson is playing for time.

Teacher, I am going to remain faithful unto the death, with God's help, in my social beliefs, but I am thoroughly angry with the American Socialist party, and I am tempted to break with it. Its apostasy is grievous. It has turned traitor to the workers by saying that it opposes the class war. And the motion to call for a strike against war has been voted down! Shame upon those who wear the mask of Socialism! But I must be brave and loving in my public as well as my private life; so I shall stick by the workers, no matter what they do.

Helen Keller to Mrs. Macy:

Montgomery, March 5, 1917.

DEAREST TEACHER:

Just think, last Friday was my soul-birthday, and I had to spend that day of days away from you! Do you realize it? Thirty years ago you came to a quiet village, you, a young girl alone in the world, handicapped by imperfect vision and want of experience—you came and opened life's shut portals and let in joy, hope, knowledge and

[1]A magazine in raised print for the blind founded in 1907 by Mrs. Matilda Ziegler.

friendship. My brain is as a disc upon which the finger of God has traced the record of the waking, the resurrection, the glory, the eternal blessedness of the day I was born again. I play this wondrous record over and over, and my soul exults, trembles, aspires under the holy influence of its living strain. I pray that "this doomed time may build up in me a thousand graces which shall thus be thine," and repay you for that mighty deliverance. God bless you, my teacher, from everlasting to everlasting.

Your affectionate,
HELEN.

Montgomery, March 23, 1917.

DEAREST TEACHER:

Your letter has just come this minute. You'd laugh to hear how everybody urges me to give them the news. I pretend to grumble about making out your Braille, because I am selfish enough to want to read it all through myself first.

I sympathize entirely with you in your discouragement. We all feel old and tired sometimes. You know how I've struggled and struggled from the time I lost my sight and hearing, and I'm beginning to feel age creeping on. Blind people often age rapidly, and I've had the additional obstacle of deafness to tax my grey matter, my endurance and resources. We both have had unusual burdens laid upon us for reasons that I cannot yet fathom. Now I find myself different from those I love in temperament and in my views—and, thank God, you haven't so much of that hardship as I. But I must not complain, I firmly believe that all will come out right in the end.

I beg humbly not to go back to Wrentham. You would be sure to find things to keep you there—what you have to do is to get well as quickly as possible. The truth is, neither mother nor I could abide Wrentham and you ill. Believe me, a hut in the mountains somewhere in California would be far better for us all, there would be fewer worries and no sad associations there. We could arrange to live within fairly easy reach of provisions, and I feel that it would be best for you and me to stay by ourselves most of the time and do things our own way quietly in a small simple home. We've done it before, and we can do it again to better advantage. I'm looking around for a possible, wise plan, and if I succeed, I will suggest it to you. You're my precious trust now, and God and the world call upon me to act. . . .

Helen Keller to Mrs. Macy:

March 25, 1917.

DEAREST:

No, Teacher, I don't feel any spiritual distance between us because of our different religious views. The only time I sense any remoteness from you is when I consider how little I deserve the beautiful devotion you have lavished upon me for thirty years. As the lame daughters of Jupiter, the Litæ [prayers], ever limp far behind the swift sons of action, so my small accomplishments limp leagues behind you.

. . . I am still thinking about our future. John used to say I translated very well and that if a time came when I couldn't write any more books, I might do some translating. We both thought it would be a pleasant job, even if it wasn't lucrative, and we knew it would bring within my reach interesting books on a great variety of subjects. So now I shall study languages all I can—I have already begun —and fit myself to be a translator when I am sure that I have the right help and your health is better.

. . . The railroad men have once again wrested victory from the managers, and by a vote of five against four the Supreme Court has upheld the Adamson Law. I suppose other huge strikes will soon be threatened. The Germans are erecting a great wireless station near Mexico City with hostile intentions. It is rumoured that Carranza revealed their plot to the President. Thousands of Germans have obtained passports to Mexico from the United States. One plot after another of German origin, real or alleged, is being unearthed. Now they are trying to arrest a woman spy in Mobile, the central figure of a gigantic plot, who paraded as an advocate of American preparedness with the object of conveying information to the Germans about our defenses. Then there are persistent reports of uprising, food riots and class conflicts in Germany. Half the invaded territory of France is now cleared, and the Germans seem to be trying the French out in the open. The difficulties of Ireland are now up for discussion in the British Parliament, and they may upset Lloyd George's war policy. Above all, there has been an almost bloodless revolution in Russia! It is now trying to decide whether it will be a limited monarchy or a republic. That means a halt in its military activities along the eastern front. Even China has broken relations with Germany, and is to fight on the side of the Allies. That's the biggest portent of all. The days foretold in the Apocalypse have come. Soon there shall be voices heard crying, "One measure of oil and one measure of barley left; Hurt not the oil and the barley."

Helen Keller to Mrs. Macy:

Montgomery, April 4, 1917.

DEAREST TEACHER:

. . . You'll be thunderstruck to hear what I've been asked to do. Miss Lulie Jones of Florence has asked me to write a petition for the Teachers' Association of Alabama, urging the legislature to pass a law whereby the eyes of new-born babies shall be treated with nitrate of silver. Oh, the joy and satisfaction I feel in being able to help save the children of my beautiful state from a foe more terrible than war itself!

Well, life may be sad, mournful, tragic, bewildering and all that; but I'm enjoying the Pickwickians. Oh, the overwhelming greatness and benevolence of Mr. Pickwick! Oh, the colossal and monumental conceit of poor, ineffectual Winkle! Oh, the delightful and delicious impudence of Sam Weller!

I must stop now and write out the petition.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

I am having a very strange experience here. I constantly seem to remember things, sometimes in a shadowy way, again vividly, of having been here before, or in a similar tropical place. The feel of the sudden hot sun after a downpour of rain stirs and excites me. The green of the sugar-cane on the hills is disturbingly familiar, and the blue shadows cast by the shoulder of a mountain where there is a sharp curve of the road make me—well, make me turn my head aside quickly, as if I expected to see someone I know. Isn't it queer? The bayonet-plant makes me want to run, I'm sure I feel the sting of its long, sharp fingers in my flesh! The impression is so strong that I find myself feeling the spot!

The other night as we were driving home from San Juan a turn of the road brought us close to dark water. A yellow moon was gliding in the east. Harry said, "Look!" Polly leant out of the car to see what was there. I couldn't try to see, my whole body was stiff with fear. I knew as certainly as if I saw it with my physical eyes that two naked men were fighting fiercely in that dim light. That is just what was happening. When Polly and Harry told me what they saw, I was cold all over, and filled with a desperate sense of loneliness. Fantastic, isn't it? Whatever the cause, these impressions seem reminiscent. Who knows—an Irish maiden of the ancient line of Sullivans may have loved a Spanish soldier well, but not wisely. You

know the armies against Ireland were often mercenaries—French, Spanish and Dutch—adventurers from every land.

As the peons work or walk or sit on their doorsteps, they croon in plaintive, rhythmic measure what they are doing, much as you talk to yourself, Helen—"Picking oranges, one by one." "Fishing, throwing the line, pulling it in." "Walking, one step then another, short steps, long steps"—the way I taught you adjectives, do you remember?

I wish it were easier for me to write Braille! The slowness of the process keeps many a thought unspoken. But you know they are in my heart as surely as the golden daffodils you wrote about were underground all winter. My thought will bloom in the springtime of our reunion and, like the daffodils, give you a moment of joy.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

. . . I am sad despite all the beauty that billows about me because you aren't here to enjoy it with me. The days slip past, and nothing is done that matters because we are apart. All this sweetness, this flashing of wings, this sun dripping gold on the earth lose much of their charm, since I can't share them with you.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

. . . It is beautiful—this slow, peaceful life in this backward island, with nothing to disturb one but the dropping to the floor every few seconds of a lizard when another lizard pulls off its leg. It used to keep us awake, but now that we have become accustomed to the sound, especially when we know they can always grow another leg, it doesn't disturb us any more than the war news from the civilized front.

Mrs. Macy to Helen Keller:

. . . You know, Helen dear, Socrates believed in the existence of the Fortunate Isles somewhere beyond the blue zenith of our sky—isles which those who had lived in beauty sailed to after death. Well, I found one of the Fortunate Isles while still alive. Here I find freedom from the vexations of wars and politics and duties that have never interested me. This is the realm of warm delight—the land to which Ulysses and his companions came in the afternoon—the land

of the lotus eaters—where it is always afternoon. Here is calm and contentment! I tremble when I think I must return to the north with its turmoil, its hypocrisies, its silly fads and sillier conventions.

Didn't I tell you that entering the World War was one of the high purposes Providence had in store for America? The Socialists—the intellectual variety—have behaved in all countries like the proverbial sheep. A few, a very few—Debs, Liebknecht, Juares and Bertrand Russell (but they killed Juares, and they will kill Liebknecht when he becomes a menace) have kept their heads. Hatred of Germany will soon transfer their idealism into a hundred per cent patriotism. I don't believe any of them have read Karl Marx, and if they have, they haven't a glimmering of what it means. Well, so be it; I feel no urge to enlighten them.

Which last was pure sauciness on her part, for she had not read Karl Marx either. She knew him only by marriage—her marriage with John Macy.

CHAPTER XIX

Shadows and Footlights

THE United States officially declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. On April 9th Helen wrote to her teacher: "There is little to tell—little that is bright or good. All happiness has left us with the departure of peace from our land." Mrs. Macy and Polly came North on the next sailing of the *Carolina.* When they reached New York City Helen and her mother were there to welcome them.

The four women went on to Wrentham, but only to dismantle the place, which, aside from the sorrows it sheltered, was now, with wartime prices, too expensive to keep. They offered it for sale (it was subsequently bought by the Jordan Marsh department store as a rest home for girls) and, because of Mrs. Macy's continued ill health, rented a cottage for the summer on Lake St. Catherine in Vermont. By autumn Mrs. Macy was much better, but to avoid further complications she went back to Lake Placid, where the doctor, after a brief examination, suavely told her that there had been a mistake about the diagnosis in the first place. Her report must have been mixed with that of someone else. She had never had tuberculosis!

A portentous year, 1917. In May, while they were at Lake St. Catherine, the Selective Service Act was passed. In June the Espionage Act was passed; in June General Pershing arrived in France; in June Herbert Hoover was called home from his work with the Commission for Relief in Belgium to be made food dictator of the United States. In August the Food Control Act was passed. In September the revenue and soldiers and sailors insurance and the second Liberty Loan acts were passed. In

December the government took over control of the railroads, and in December Congress passed the Eighteenth Amendment. It was in 1917 that the revolution began in Russia. It was the year of the big lumber strike in the Northwest under the organization of the Industrial Workers of the World, the year when I.W.W. and Wobbly became words to make sedate ladies and gentlemen shiver with fright. The I.W.W.'s were the Bolsheviks of America, and while everyone here knew in those days that the revolution in Russia was failing—they had first-hand information on that—they were not so sure about the I.W.W. The Russian Revolution was far away; the I.W.W. was close at hand—too close.

The I.W.W. had proved its power, and it had announced frankly that its aim was not, like that of the American Federation of Labor, amelioration of existing conditions; it was out to create an entirely new industrial order. It claimed to have embodied the best features of syndicalism, socialism, and anarchism, without any of their weaknesses. The new society towards which they were working was to be formed within the shell of the old so that when capitalism was abolished the workers would be able to carry on without interruption. The organization had in 1917—and to those who can remember the terror with which its name was mentioned in those days it seems incredible that there could have been so few—85,000 members, including those in Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and South Africa.

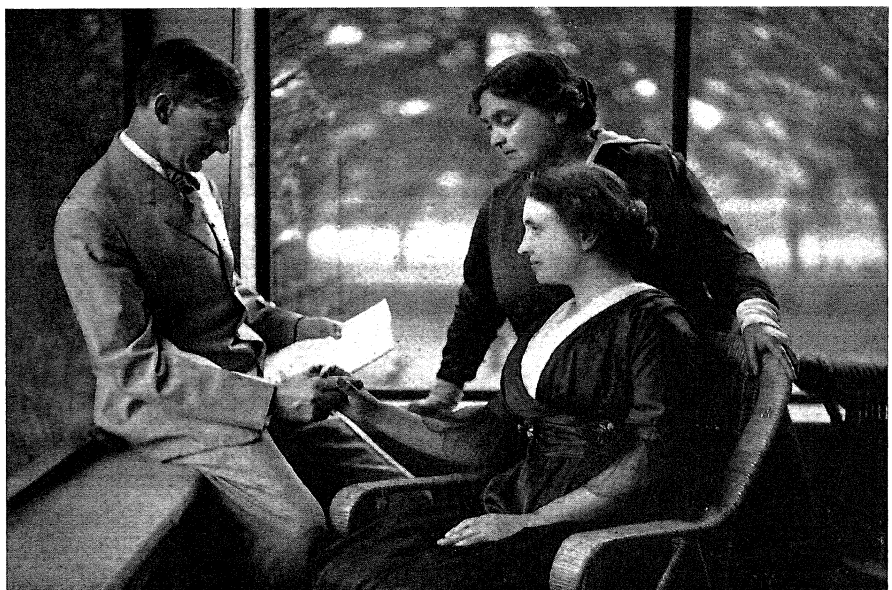
It was a period of strikes and unrest. The war had intensified the desperate struggle between greed (the profiteer) on the one hand and hunger (the poorly paid labourer) on the other. People everywhere were surrounded by vague and terrible fears; the I.W.W. had the virtue of being something definite to be afraid of. There were other radical groups, but none so formidable as this. In 1917 it was dangerous to sympathize with them, dangerous to do anything that the majority thought not one hundred per cent American. No one was allowed to have

a private opinion of what constituted Americanism. But Helen had been confirmed in her social beliefs, and Mrs. Macy had been converted to radicalism by the I.W.W. The men who were leaders in 1912 during the Lawrence strike were still leaders in 1917. Big Bill Haywood was general secretary-treasurer; Joe Ettor was assistant secretary and general organizer. Mrs. Macy and Helen had followed their work; they knew both men personally, trusted them, and felt that they had reason to trust them.

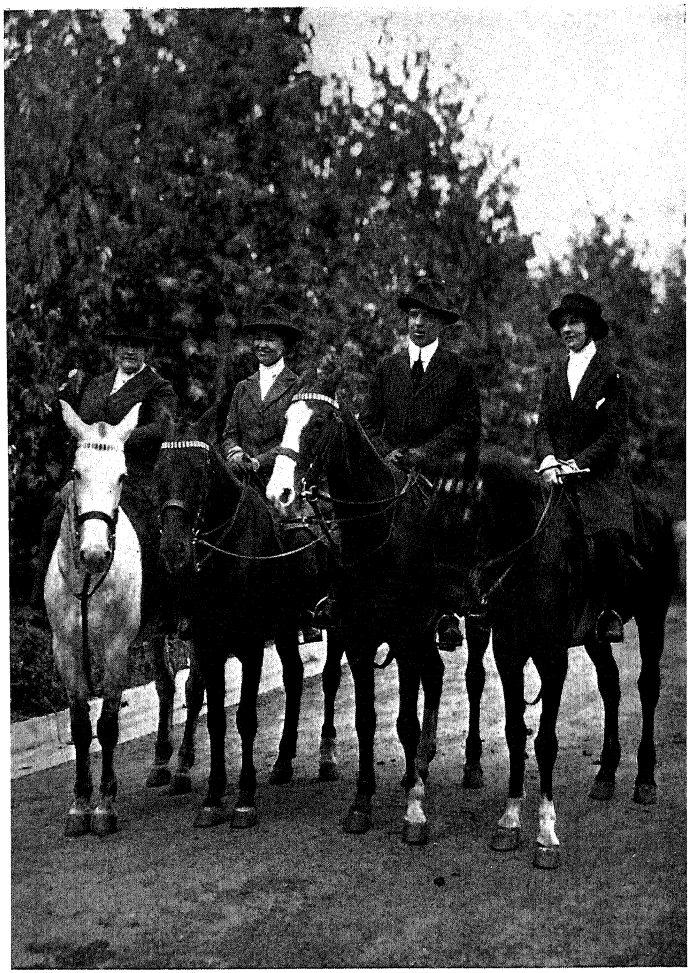
With the country in such a state of agitation and the world torn with war and horror, the ideal home in California or anywhere else was out of the question. However much Mrs. Macy and Helen might desire peace, they could not have it while there was still so much work to do. As soldiers for peace (and two more belligerent pacifists never lived) they could not retire from the battlefield until the fight was won. It was with the thought of making the fullest use of what influence they had that they came to New York City after they left Lake St. Catherine, took rooms at the Prince George Hotel, and began looking for a home. Through the head waiter there they learned of a house for sale in Forest Hills, fourteen miles out of the city—a small brick house built by a German family. It had as many points and angles as a cactus and was on the wrong side of the railroad tracks. There was only a patch of ground in contrast with the Wrentham acres, and the house was only half the size of the one they had sold, but it was comfortable.

In October they moved in and set themselves to tearing off gingerbread frescoes, breaking out stained-glass windows, and transforming the attic into a study for Helen. A circle of small evergreens, with an iron railing inside, was planted in the garden so that she might walk in privacy whenever she chose. Polly did not have time, and her teacher did not have eyesight to take her every day for a long tramp. She had to get her exercise alone.

They found Ned Holmes, a close friend of the Cambridge



JOHN MACY, HELEN KELLER, AND MRS. MACY
Forest Hills.



RIDING IN CALIFORNIA
Left to right, Mrs. Macy, Helen Keller, Helen's groom, Polly Thomson.

days, desperately ill in St. Luke's Hospital in New York City and brought him home with them to take care of him. Golden Sieglinde, the most beautiful of Thora's puppies, was there, and Polly Thomson. That was the household. Now and then John Macy came. They saw John Reed, Arturo Giovannitti, Carlo Tresca, and Flavio Venanzi, with whom Helen began the study of Italian. They talked with a number of other ardent prophets of a new era and kept up with Margaret Sanger, Emma Goldman, Big Bill and Joe, and Eugene Debs. And while the conservative hailed the new era as a disaster they smiled and welcomed it as something worth living and dying for. The only difficulty seemed to be that dead or alive there was nothing they could do to hasten its coming.

It was their desire at this time to do something for the blinded soldiers. They had thought of going to France, but decided that they laboured under too many physical handicaps to be of any real use on the Western front. Helen made speeches and collected money for the soldiers and continued to dream about them when she slept. She kept up with Sir Arthur Pearson, the blind publisher, founder in 1915 of St. Dunstan's Home in London for the rehabilitation of British soldiers who had lost their sight in battle. Sooner or later something like this would have to be started in the United States, but in 1917 there was nothing practical that Helen and her teacher could do beyond writing messages of encouragement and making speeches. It was a comfort to them to know from letters abroad that Helen was an inspiration to the blinded soldiers at St. Dunstan's and elsewhere.

Neither of them was in any frame of mind to go back to lecturing. All that Helen wished to say, except about the blind, no one (except her teacher) wished to hear. Yet the future had to be considered. Helen had long been disturbed about that. She knew that what money she had would on her death revert to the estates from which it came, leaving Mrs. Macy penniless and unprotected. They had made money in their various enter-

prises, but they had never been able to save any. They were always lucky to get back home out of debt. Wherever they went they moved through a flood of heartbreaking appeals, and they were not stern enough or callous enough to resist them. While they were lecturing, instead of thriftily storing up the surplus, they were sending it in checks to the blind in Des Moines, to the deaf in Turkey, to strikers in New Jersey, and to the unemployed everywhere. If there was any left they spent it joyously and lavishly upon their more cautious and impecunious friends, ferreting out and giving tangible shape to their secret desires. They were never able, if they had money, to resist the temptation to make someone else happy with it. It was impossible to make them spend more than they needed upon themselves. They had beautiful clothes always, and in their fitful moments of prosperity an automobile and a servant, but that was all. Their friends tried to frighten them into discretion, and a number of them finally gave up all attempts to make them financially comfortable. It seemed no use to give Helen and Mrs. Macy money to spend upon themselves if they were going to send it to an almshouse to buy Christmas presents for the inmates. Their explanation that the inmates needed it more than they was not enough to smooth the troubled waters. This situation has lasted to the present day. In 1932, when Helen was given the annual achievement award of $5,000 offered by the *Pictorial Review*, her friends begged her to store it away, to lock it up, or to buy something that she needed for herself. She answered by turning it over to the American Foundation for the Blind for the use of her less fortunate comrades in blindness and deafness.

Neither in 1917 nor at any other time has Mrs. Macy given much thought to her old age beyond hoping that she would not live long enough to have one, and she has given even less thought to saving up for it. But she has constantly been brought up against the necessity of thinking about money, and in every aspect that she has ever considered it, it has had the power

to make her unhappy. The inequalities of its distribution and administration have always disturbed her—the injustice it can work, for example, in the hands of ruthlessness or stupidity in contrast with the mighty beneficence which follows its direction at the hands of intelligence and humanity. Even in her personal relationships it keeps her uneasy. When she is with the poor she is overwhelmed by shame at her own good fortune, and when she is with the rich, the spectre of all the misery she has ever known stalks at her side like Banquo's unquiet ghost. Against a sumptuous background of marble and tapestry she watches a little Irish girl growing blind because there is not money enough to surround her with cleanliness; she sees a long procession of unwanted old men and women and little children and twisted young men and women crowding into the doors of prisons and almshouses stretching all the way across the country, and watches with despair while the institutions turn away from the inmates to the public and devote themselves to the great American art of window-dressing. She looks for a remedy and thinks she sees that neither the rich nor the poor will ever provide it. If it comes at all, it must be through the whole body of the people—through the State. The State must be reorganized. That will take a long time. In the meantime here is Helen. And Mrs. Macy's biggest interest is not the State, but Helen—to increase Helen's capacities for living and to spread her influence for good.

Early in 1918, almost before the fresh plaster had dried on the new house, a golden opportunity came to their hands. Helen saw in it a realization of her dream to provide for her teacher, and Mrs. Macy saw in it a larger chance than they had ever had of sending out the inspiration of Helen's message to the world. It was as if Midas himself had knocked at their door the morning Dr. Francis Trevelyan Miller appeared there with a plan for dramatizing Helen's life on the screen. In connection with a history of the world which he was writing, it had occurred to him that such a film might throw out a beacon of hope and

light to the war-mad people. The idea struck a responsive chord in Forest Hills—the more they thought about it the better it seemed—and the undertaking began almost at once on a high emotional plane.

The first plan, which Mrs. Macy promptly vetoed, was to finance the venture by collecting a philanthropic fund on the grounds that it was to be of immeasurable benefit to humanity. But Mrs. Macy said that if it was worth doing at all it was worth doing on a sound practical basis. Philanthropy was therefore abandoned, and the money was advanced by one of the kings of American finance, a multimillionaire whose name is known all over the world, but who, for reasons which will be obvious, has always preferred to remain anonymous.

There were, to be sure, one or two slight setbacks before they left Forest Hills, but these they either turned aside or overcame. Their spirits were somewhat dampened when a theatrical agent no less famous than Miss Elisabeth Marbury told them that they did not have enough story to make a great picture. The beginning was all right—Helen's release from darkness and silence, but after that what did they have? Exciting adventures? Lovers? Romance? Then, said Miss Marbury, they must invent them. This they received with indignation. The picture above all must be true, and it could not be true if history was distorted to make a story. And besides, they had not only Helen's physical release from blindness and deafness, they had her mental release from bondage into the light of her new social beliefs. The story of two great deliverances. What more could anybody want?

Before Dr. Miller had time to finish the first draft of the scenario, Helen precipitated a crisis by publicly deploring the persecutions of the I.W.W. Panic followed. Her teacher was told that if the picture was to succeed Helen must for the time being, at least, confine her appeals to their great humanitarian effort and let other great humanitarian efforts alone, especially such highly dubious ones as those sponsored by the I.W.W. She must remember that the I.W.W. were the allies of Red Russia, that

they were enemies of her country. She must remember that the United States was at war and that if she persisted in her present course, the government, which now controlled the railroads, might refuse transportation to Hollywood, that managers might refuse theatres, and that the people might refuse to look at the picture, even if a theatre were found.

This was tided over, and they set out for Hollywood, leaving the house and the dog, Sieglinde, in charge of Ned Holmes. No misgivings went with them. Helen's voice, hitherto the unsurmountable obstacle, did not count, for this was in the days of the silent film, nor even, except for the later scenes, her ability as an actress. A child had to be secured to take her place in the early scenes, but this presented no problem in a place like Hollywood, which abounds with clever children. A younger woman must take Mrs. Macy's part, and a younger woman still the part of Helen at Cambridge. Trained and competent actresses were readily obtained and placed under the direction of Mr. George Platt who had worked with Winthrop Ames in New York City, and whose greatest success had been the staging (not as a motion picture but as a play) of Maeterlinck's *Bluebird.* This seemed a happy omen, for Maeterlinck had once sent Helen a picture of himself inscribed to "The Girl Who Found the Bluebird," and his wife, Georgette Le Blanc, had written a book about her which she called by the same title, *The Girl Who Found the Bluebird.* And there was some kinship between Helen's search for light and the search of Mytyl and Tyltyl for happiness. They had unlimited means to carry out their ideas, and they had in Helen's a name of extraordinary box-office value. They were all practically unversed in the ways of Hollywood, but this did not trouble them. It was their modest hope, modestly expressed, to attain "the highest record ever achieved in motion pictures."

They set out therefore with delusions of grandeur, and the picture brightly caparisoned in their visions of the future, began, as soon as it was mounted to ride off madly, like young Lord Ronald in Stephen Leacock's story, in all directions at once.

No one had the power of absolute veto and they all had different ideas of what the picture should be. Mr. Platt wanted it to be an artistic triumph, Mrs. Macy and Dr. Miller wanted it to be a true historical record, and the representative of the multi-millionaire wanted it to be a rousing commercial success. All of these desirable ends might have been attained if they had had in Helen's life alone enough of a story, but they had not been long at work before they discovered that Miss Marbury was right. There really was not a great deal more to say after the story of Helen's first release was told. Most of the drama of her life had taken place inside her head, and it was not possible to put it on the screen.

This left the field wide open for experimentation. A sub-plot dealing with modern industrial conditions carrying a heavy love interest was hurriedly concocted. Maeterlinck's influence burst forth suddenly and resplendently in a number of symbolic scenes. Knowledge, for example, represented by a frail and beauteous maiden wrestling at the entrance of the Cave of Father Time with the brute Ignorance for possession of the soul of the infant Helen. The infant Helen (grown now to womanhood and Helen herself taking the part) appearing before suffering humanity (recruited from the studios in the form of extras) in the guise of the Mother of Sorrows. Helen, the pacifist, in an anomalous uniform mounted on a wild white horse, blowing a brass trumpet, and galloping dangerously forward, a modern Joan of Arc leading the world to Deliverance. *Deliverance* was the title that Helen gave the picture.

Emotionalism could not be kept out of the studio. Helen surprised everyone with her histrionic ability. She went about her duties as an actress as she went about everything, with Napoleonic determination and courage. Mrs. Macy devised a system of taps by which Mr. Platt's directions could be relayed to her, and either she or Polly Thomson pounded them out on the floor or the ground, as the case might be. Often Mr. Platt had tears in his eyes as he directed her. No one who watched it in the

making could doubt the success of the picture, once it was finished. They did not see it before they left Hollywood—as a matter of fact, there was not yet a picture to see—and they had to borrow money to get back to Long Island, but they left California feeling that the future was at last secure. Days of gracious plenty lay ahead.

They ate a dismal Christmas dinner on the train and arrived in Forest Hills on December 26th in the cold winter of 1918, with snow piled everywhere, milk bottles left mountain-high at the back steps, and dust so thick in the house that they could see their footprints as they moved from room to room.

They expected the release of the picture in February, but it was not ready by that time. Parts of it were shown to a small private group which included Helen and Polly and Mrs. Macy. The early scenes were pronounced admirable, but the later ones in which Helen had acted "in person" needed strengthening. More pictures were made, but this was supposed to cause a delay of only a week or two.

After the preview the three women went to Baltimore to visit the blinded soldiers in the U.S. General Hospital No. 7, the one called Evergreen, the St. Dunstan's of America. All of their lives Mrs. Macy and Helen had lived on intimate terms with blindness, they had known thousands of blind persons, but they had never seen anything that caused them the anguish they experienced on this visit. They had seen isolated individuals suddenly blinded, but they had never before come up against a strong body of valiant young men cut off forever from light and liberty.

As they entered the portals of the institution Mrs. Macy shuddered and Helen felt the shudder. Blind men were everywhere; blind men without arms; blind men without legs; blind men on crutches; blind men in bandages. And it was not the seeing in those early days who knew what the men were suffering: it was the blind. It was the seeing who came with fatuous words of cheer: "You are fortunate to be blind since you escape

the sight of so many ugly things." Scapini, the French veteran who lost his sight at Neuville, said, "I think that the first time I heard this remark I could have killed the person who made it." Too much merry chirping is as irksome in the dark as it is in the light. There is a record of a great blind man—Fawcett of England—throwing his soap out of the window to stop the singing of a too persistent nightingale.

It was the thoughtless seeing who sometimes acted on the assumption that the men were deaf as well as blind. "God, I'd shoot my brains out if I were blind." "I would rather my son were dead than blind." "Isn't it dreadful? No arms—and blind." Such remarks as these were made within the hearing of the blind men. And they were sometimes discussed as if they were unable to understand what was being said. "How does he know which threads to use in weaving?" "Is his typewriter different from an ordinary typewriter?" "What will he do when he goes home from here?" The blind man could have answered, but he was not asked.

The more sensitive among those who had always known blindness appreciated the difference between themselves and the soldiers, and some of them, like Miss Nina Rhoades, felt that it was presumptuous to make comparisons. "I had never known what sight really was," she said. "One can scarcely miss what one has never had." Blindness to her seemed "perfectly simple and natural," but she knew that it could not seem thus to the soldiers. Neither Mrs. Macy nor Helen had ever faced the terror of the sudden plunge into the dark. Helen had not been obliged to learn, as these soldiers were learning, how to walk through blackness. She had always known.

I shall remember forever [this is Scapini again] the first chair I bumped into in my own home, it was disheartening. That was to be my life—bumping into chairs! That is not a serious matter in itself—it looks silly; but it is exasperating to bump into a chair when it is so easy to avoid it, provided one can see! Yes, but that was precisely my trouble, I could not see. Such helplessness!

Mrs. Macy and Helen found some of the men in despair over the Braille dots. "They feel just like sandpaper," one of them said. They found men raving and rebellious, and they found men of quiet courage. One of them said that he found blindness interesting. "I keep wondering what discovery I shall make next," he said. "Things feel so different in my hands. I like to puzzle them out—a sort of 'bandage-your-eyes-and-tell-who-it-is' game, you understand. Life is a game anyway. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. Why worry?" They found some of the men reading, others tying knots, weaving, making baskets, or binding books. Helen danced with some of them and "listened" while others sang, "There'll be a hot time in the old town to-night."

"Gee," said one of the newcomers, still in bandages, as he shook hands with her, "I read about you in school. I never thought then I'd be blind myself."

When Helen talked with the soldiers she did not try to cheer them with false optimism. She told them that the road ahead was difficult, no matter how they looked at it. She told them that the hardest part of it was the loss of their personal liberty. She said that they would find compensations in books and work and friends and in the realization that every triumph they made would help others who were handicapped to succeed, but, even with this, they must not think that there would not be days when they would feel restless and lonely and cheated. There was no cure for these days but work. And, as for happiness, she herself was a walking testimonial to the fact that a blind person, even with deafness added, could often get more fun out of life than many of those who could see and hear. She spoke bravely and well—and came home to weep over the futility and hypocrisy of words and the helplessness and stupidity of man.

Mrs. Macy came away seething with fury. So this was what the work for the blind came to in the end. Laws might be passed to save the eyes of little children, safety devices might be passed to save the eyes of men in industry, sight-saving classes might

be introduced into the public schools, and free clinics might be established everywhere, but these soldiers—what could be done for them? The problem of which they were a part was bigger than blindness, and for that problem she saw no solution. No solution while men are what they are, while states are what they are, while nationalism reigns, and chauvinism stalks abroad.

But the sombre train of their thoughts about Evergreen was bisected by thoughts about the picture. Now that they had had time to reflect, some of the scenes appeared silly even to their partial eyes, especially one in which Helen in mediæval costume came into a council chamber where all the kings and generals and statesmen connected with the war were assembled and made a plea (an exceedingly feeble one, she now felt) for peace and the rights of man. This scene and some others she and Mrs. Macy wished to omit. If more episodes were needed, they could get them at Evergreen. The title *Deliverance* was a charitable mantle which might cover anything, and the hospital in Baltimore sheltered deliverance of a noble sort. These dashing suggestions got the picture into a hopeless tangle for a while, but the Forest Hills household was still confident. "There is no doubt," Helen wrote Mrs. Thaw in April, "of the success of the picture. The big bidders are bidding against each other for it."

In July Ned Holmes drove Helen and Mrs. Macy and Polly to Boston to see John Macy. He had been ill, and they were "much worried about him. He looked dreadfully," Helen wrote to her mother, "and seemed like a feeble old man. Something went wrong with his back, and that with the heat 'knocked him out,' as he expressed it. He said he would come to New York as soon as he got back some strength." After they left him they drove out to Wrentham. "I thought," Helen continued, "I could visit the old Wrentham place with some equanimity; but alas!—as we came away, I just sobbed aloud, greatly to my own mortification."

In a postscript she added the news on *Deliverance:*

We had very little definite information about the picture until two weeks ago when in desperation Ned called upon Mr. Shubert. You may not know that it is more difficult to see Mr. Shubert than the President of the United States—or even the Mikado of Japan. Ned was permitted to talk with Mr. S. only two minutes and a half. He learned that the picture had been sold, and that it would open in Shubert's Broadway theatre next October. That means that we shall not receive our payment until then. We have been frightfully "hard up," mother. I don't remember a time since college days when we were so much "up against it." But we shall manage all right. Our credit is good, and people understand. Everyone believes in the success of the picture.

But *Deliverance* did not wait until October. Exactly a month to the day after Helen's letter to her mother, the Actors' Equity Strike began, and most of the theatres on Broadway were darkened. The sympathies of Mrs. Macy and Helen were with the strikers. Helen made speeches for them and marched in one of their parades. But since motion-picture actors were not directly involved in the controversy, films were used to supplant the attractions in the legitimate theatre; Mrs. Macy and Helen discovered in the midst of their work for the actors that their own film *Deliverance* was to be pulled into service as a strike breaker! It opened on the night of August 18th in the Lyric Theatre where a forgotten comedy called *The Five Million* had been playing. Box seats were sent to Forest Hills for the first performance, but they were not used. Helen made a public statement of her reasons for refraining from looking at her own picture.

If she and her teacher and Polly had sought amusement in New York City that evening they would have gone to the Actors' Gala performance at the Lexington Theatre where John and Ethel Barrymore, W. C. Field, Eddie Cantor, John Charles Thomas, and many other striking actors were playing, including Marie Dressler, of whose "declining years" Mr. Alexander Woollcott was unkind enough to speak in his review the following morning. Ed Wynn was part of the show, too. Enjoined

from appearing on any stage, he graced the aisle with his idiocies and brought the audience to its feet.

Rain and lightning had crippled the transit lines in New York on that stormy night, but *Deliverance* opened to a capacity house. Nor was this because it was the only distinguished picture on Broadway. Miriam Cooper was there in Longfellow's "vitally dramatic poem," *Evangeline;* Theda Bara was there in Tom Moore's "soul-inspiring masterpiece," *Kathleen Mavourneen;* Norma Talmadge was there in "her foremost screen triumph," *The Way of a Woman.* D. W. Griffith was there with *The Mother and the Law,* "a sensation," of course, and "the first and only play on Broadway dealing with the present labour and strike unrest." Mabel Normand was there, and Harold Lloyd, Elsie Ferguson, Charles Ray, and Olive Tell.

The next morning when they read the reviews Mrs. Macy and Helen were more than ever convinced that they were about to be wealthy women. The *Times* declared that *Deliverance* was a remarkable success—a triumph. The cast was unusually excellent, the photography exceptionally good. On a number of occasions, as when Helen pronounced the historic words "I-am-not-dumb-now," the audience burst into spontaneous applause. Optimism was spread on a little too thickly, and there was too much moralizing, but throughout its main course the picture was "compelling." The first part where the now famous teacher came to Alabama was pronounced, as it always has been and always must be, the most appealing. The *World,* with an engaging disregard of gender, spoke of the wizard teacher and called the picture a masterpiece. The *Mail* declared it a screen classic, the *Globe* said that it was far more absorbing than a love story, and other papers were equally lavish with their praise. "Strong men were moved to tears," the advertisement announced, "children sat spellbound, women were torn with emotion, and all were awakened to a new realization of the possibilities of life."

The picture stayed on Broadway about a month before it

began its desultory wanderings about the country. Commercially it was as great in failure as its actors had hoped it would be in success. Mrs. Macy and Helen never got any money out of it except the advance (which was generous), but they had spent that in Hollywood.

The financial situation (even with the help of Mr. Carnegie's pension) was by this time almost desperate, but before they had time to plan a series of lectures to get themselves out of it a new proposition was presented to them. Sometime in 1919 a young musician by the name of George Lewis, back from the war, was inspired to compose a song about Helen. Dr. Miller wrote the words. It was called "Star of Happiness," dedicated to Helen, and published by Shapiro Bernstein and Company, Inc., whose best seller that season was a winsome ditty called, "Yes, We Have No Bananas." Mr. Lewis had had some experience in vaudeville, he had seen Helen, and because of the excellent press which attended *Deliverance* thought he saw a chance for her behind the footlights. This was in the great days of vaudeville when the programmes in the big cities carried as many as nine acts and freak performers (the word is used in its vaudeville sense) like Ernest Thompson Seton, Carl Sandburg, and Helen Keller could be introduced. The larger programmes were not yet degraded (the word is again used in its vaudeville sense) by the presence of motion pictures.

Mr. Lewis approached two of the most enterprising agents in New York City, Messrs. Harry and Herman Weber, and was met with profound scepticism. Vaudeville was entertainment, they assured him, and there was nothing entertaining about a blind and deaf woman. People came to laugh—a fine laugh they'd get out of this. But Mr. Lewis's insistence, coupled with the laudatory reviews of *Deliverance*, persuaded the Webers to run out to Forest Hills and at least take a look at the woman.

They expected to find her interesting but morbid and depressing; instead they found her radiant and gay. They found her happy and agreeable, altogether delightful. It did not take

them long to reach a decision. She would do one of two things. She would fill the theatres or she would empty them. They were ready to gamble that she would fill them.

The act as it was first conceived was elaborately built around the song, "Star of Happiness," but the Webers simplified it into a twenty minutes' educational talk. The set showed a drawing room with a fire crackling on the hearth; French windows at one side opening into a garden; a grand piano holding a great vase of flowers at the left. Velvet hangings in the background. When the curtain went up Mrs. Macy entered left stage in full spotlight (and no one but herself knew the agony that light cost her eyes). She came forward and told who Helen was, explained how she had taught her (just as in the lectures), and retired to the shadows while the orchestra played Mendelssohn's Spring Song, Helen's cue to enter. Polly (without appearing) gave a signal, Helen parted the curtains and came to the stage alone, resting her hand lightly on the edge of the piano to guide herself until she reached the flowers. Mrs. Macy came forward once more and stood beside her while Helen spoke for a few minutes, usually on what a wonderful old world it would be if heads and hearts would work together. The audience was then allowed to ask questions. There was little difference between this performance and the regular lectures, except that music played a larger part (Helen showed how she could keep time to the piano) and that it took twenty minutes instead of an hour and a half.

It looked promising but Mrs. Macy and Helen were too chastened by their experience in Hollywood to expect anything to come of it. Helen's oldest and most difficult problem, her voice, was about to be put to its severest test. The theatres were larger than most of the lecture halls to which she was accustomed, and the audiences, she heard, were rowdy collections of plain people with exceedingly bad manners, very different from the polite assemblies that came to the lectures or the congregations she sometimes addressed in churches. They

showed no mercy to performers who failed. Even the chivalry which Helen instinctively awakens might not be enough to save her. And if they spared her, they would not spare her teacher.

The first performance was given in Mount Vernon, about twenty miles from New York City, on February 16, 1920. So many came that numbers had to be turned away from the doors of the theatre, but, after all, this was only Mount Vernon, not New York, and the two performers were as frightened as they had been on the day of the first lecture in Montclair, N. J., in February, 1913, when, seven days later, they stepped out on the stage of the Palace Theatre on Broadway. More than upon anything else the success of the act depended upon how it was received here.

The audience was as nervous as the actors. They all knew Helen, and they wanted her to win, but they did not expect it. When she came in, walking, in spite of the piano, with the uncertain steps of a blind woman in an unfamiliar place, the tension increased. Helen spoke in that strange, unearthly voice of hers, and Mrs. Macy repeated the words after her. Then something happened. The audience saw before them (they had eyes only for Helen) a radiantly happy woman whose victory had been slowly and painfully wrested out of blindness and silence. A great wave of sympathy rushed across the footlights. Helen could feel its vibrations. "Before she had been on the stage two minutes," said the New York *Sun and Herald* (see pages 244, 245), "Helen Keller had conquered again, and the Monday afternoon audience at the Palace, one of the most critical and cynical in the world, was hers."

From the very first vaudeville audiences loved Helen, and she adored them. Hitherto she had spoken in vacancy like one who talks into a microphone. Here she could always tell what was happening, and it was always the same. First, the silence and uneasiness, then the quick lift, the laughter, and the great climax. She was held over at the Palace for the second week,

and when she went on the road her salary was one that a movie star might have envied.

Everywhere she went she was hailed, as indeed she is, one of the marvels of the age, the wonder woman of our time. No longer was she poor little deaf and blind Helen who talked about things she did not understand; she was an archpriestess of light, an angel of mercy. Mark Twain's statement that she and Napoleon were the two most remarkable characters of the nineteenth century was repeated a thousand times, and extravagant compliment was piled on extravagant compliment. The angel Gabriel could not have had a better press.

In many ways they found acting in vaudeville easier than lecturing. They usually stayed a week in one place, and they were not obliged to submit to entertainments planned by local celebrities. Their manager, Mr. Harry Weber, was extraordinarily kind and helpful. He was used to dealing with far more temperamental stars than these, and, for their part, they felt (as they had not felt with some of their lecture managers) that they were in the hands of an expert and did as they were told. Sophie Tucker taught Polly the art of make-up, and she, like Helen, enjoyed the excitement, the quick changes, and the brilliant colour of life behind the footlights.

At the same time Helen was severely criticized, just as Madame Schumann-Heink was in 1932 when she entered vaudeville. Both women felt the same way. It was honest work and they were glad to have it. Helen's name (and, no doubt, Madame Schumann-Heink's name, also) brought a new group to the theatres—a group that had never looked at a vaudeville programme before—and some of them were so horrified at finding her on the same bill with cheap sidewalk patter, trained seals, monkeys, midgets, and acrobats that they refused to stay. Some who stayed remained prejudiced, but most of them were won over. Many who heard of the performance but had no intention of seeing it wrote to her to protest against it. A letter came from France deploring the fact that she was allowing

herself to be exhibited. There was no complaint against the act itself. Everyone agreed that it was dignified and instructive. But it should not be given in theatres; Helen Keller should talk only in churches and lecture rooms and private homes. But none of the protesters offered to help her in a practical way, and Mr. Weber had a way of silencing them by asking simply, "Will you pay her what we do?"

The success of the act according to box-office standards may be judged by the demand for it. During the two years that followed the opening in New York City Mrs. Macy, Helen, and Polly, like seasoned troupers, went all over this country and into many parts of Canada. One of the circuits lasted forty weeks. Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Montreal, Providence, Buffalo, Toronto, Washington, Philadelphia, Syracuse, Des Moines, Minneapolis, Duluth, Winnipeg, Calgary, Victoria, Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Fresno, Los Angeles, Denver, Lincoln, Omaha, Kansas City, and Sioux City were among their ports of call. Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Youngstown, Cleveland, Detroit, South Bend, Davenport, and St. Louis were on the list. "You don't get such tours nowadays," Mr. Weber says sadly.

It was an unhappy two years for Mrs. Macy. She had never taken pleasure in public speaking, though her voice was charming and she was met everywhere with praise for her part in the performance. "You always tell the story of Helen," people said to her, "as if you were telling it for the first time." She did not like the garish atmosphere, and the bright lights and glitter hurt her eyes almost beyond endurance. More than once during these two years the oculists who were variously in charge of them told her that she must stop immediately or she would inevitably and very soon be totally blind. This she had heard so many times that she paid no attention to it, and when she stopped it was not because of her eyes.

She was fifty-four years old when the vaudeville tours began, and she found the life hard. She was not well, and she was heart-

sick and worried. The press notices made her cynical, for she knew to a moment how quickly the reporters would turn on Helen if she gave them cause. One or two of the newspapers commented upon her weariness.

It was in Toronto late in 1921 that she finally went to bed with la grippe and Polly had to take her place before the footlights. She struggled to her feet and went on again, but a few months later in Des Moines in January, 1922, she gave up. Bronchial trouble made it impossible for her to speak above a whisper. Polly was wonderfully competent. It has always been a part of Mrs. Macy's greatness that she has taken every precaution to make it possible for Helen to do without her. She had never emphasized Helen's dependence upon her, and now, more than ever, she tried to lessen it, for she saw that her own dependence upon someone else was rapidly increasing. One of the actors had fallen by the wayside. That was all. The performance did not suffer.

Carl Sandburg, who saw them in Chicago on April 7, 1922, was so moved that he wrote Helen a letter which he did not send until six years later.

I did not sign it [he said in the note which accompanied it], nor did I send it to you—just why, I do not know—perhaps I felt the style of the letter was a little high-flown. Anyhow, I do not feel now that it is high-flown, and send it to you with greetings and love.

Here is the letter, from one vaudevillian to another:

April 8, 1922.

DEAR HELEN KELLER:

I saw and heard you last night at the Palace and enjoyed it a thousand ways. It was interesting to watch that audience minute by minute come along till they loved you big and far. For myself, the surprise was to find you something of a dancer, shifting in easy postures like a good blooded race horse. I thrilled along with the audience to your saying you hear applause with your feet registering to vibration of the stage boards. Possibly the finest thing about your performance is that those who hear and see you feel that zest for

living, the zest you radiate, is more important than any formula about how to live life.

The three women kept travelling for a few weeks longer to fulfil engagements already made. Then they came back to Forest Hills to try something else.

CHAPTER XX

Dream Come True

It was like beginning again in a new world. They had no roots in Forest Hills, no particular interests there, but it would have been almost the same anywhere else, even in Wrentham. The old life was gone. Mr. Anagnos was dead, and Mrs. Hopkins and Mr. Hitz. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, Mark Twain, Henry Rogers, Laurence Hutton and his wife, Aunt Eleanor, were dead, and Mrs. Howe and Mr. Sanborn. Mrs. Keller was dead, and Dr. Bell was dying. John Macy was estranged, and they had lost faith in the radicals. Joe Ettor was almost the only one whose friendship they kept and whose opinion they valued. They still clung to Debs, but they had never known him as they had known Joe, and Debs was nearly seventy and very feeble.

They were behind in everything. Life on the road had absorbed all their energies. Helen found it difficult to read and almost impossible to write while she was travelling about the country. Thousands—literally thousands—of letters lay around the house unanswered. Some of them were important, some trivial. All had to be sorted, and since most of them were in ordinary handwriting or typewriting, a seeing person had to sort them, and since Polly was busy with tradesmen at the back door, visitors at the front door, and spending what time she had left answering the telephone, cooking, keeping house and taking care of Sieglinde, it was Mrs. Macy who had to do it. If the letters had been addressed only to herself she could have thrown them into the fire with perfect equanimity, but they were Helen's, and that was different.

Hundreds of them were masterpieces of inanity from American school children. Here are some sentences picked at random from these appalling missives:

"How are you getting along? I am getting along fine." "You will be surprised to hear from someone you do not know [nothing by this time could be less surprising], but we have organized a Helen Keller Club and would like to have a picture of you." "I guess you will be interested in my complexion. I have dark complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, and I am fifty-three inches high." "I wonder what you are doing to-day. I am not doing anything much." "We have been writing letters to noted people and we are asking them for their autographs and photographs. Please send us yours. We shall be very glad to receive them." "I often think how smart and good you could have been if you were not deaf because you are so smart as it is." "I am writing a theme on your life for the midterm. I wonder if you could give me a little personal material." "We are collecting money for a library. I understand you are a hearty supporter of educational moves. Hoping you will be intirested [*sic*] in our cause." "We have studied your life and got very many good ideas of how to shape our lives and cultivate our minds. You have had so many disadvantageous opportunities and yet have been so useful in the world."

Helen's friends begged her to throw them away, but she would not. She said she could never bear to disappoint a child, and if a number of those children never received answers it was not the fault of Helen or her teacher, but of a friend who stole a bushel or two of them and burned them.

Many of the letters required supplementary reading. Helen had to know something about Russia before she could protest against the blockade or plea for recognition of the Soviet or beg for money for relief. She was constantly called upon to sponsor peace projects, workers' plans and unions, schools for the hard of hearing or the blind. She was asked to send messages to open-air schools, magazine jubilees, testimonial dinners, and other barbaric pageantry. Commissions for the blind begged her to plead before legislatures, to send telegrams to the President, and to write articles in behalf of the blind for inkprint

and Braille publications. She would have enjoyed it if there had not been so much of it, but it was discouraging to find that finishing all of the letters in one big folder meant only that she must begin on another.

In the midst of this drudgery she was always made happy when she could feel that she had been of some use in the world, and when the blind women in Vienna wrote her that her help had enabled them to keep their home, she wrote in 1922 to Mrs. Macy from Montgomery, where she was spending a short time with her sister:

> This is one of the times when I rejoice that I am blind. I have opportunities to do a bit of good in unusual ways, and perhaps help others to realize new possibilities of life when the old philosophies and standards leave them hopeless, without spiritual resources. Who knows?

Yet Helen had no exaggerated idea of her own abilities or influence. It was on this same visit that she wrote to her teacher:

> My capacities are so humble that I don't believe anyone, except you, has really missed me from the niche I try to occupy in life's work. And you miss me because we love one another, whatever the cynics may say.

The greater part of Helen's energies was now devoted to the blind, and because of this, so, also, was the greater part of Mrs. Macy's. Left to herself Mrs. Macy would never have chosen this field as the object of her life's work. She would have elected larger issues. She would have liked "to splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comet's hair," to tear down the old world and create a new one. There is something terrifying about the sweep of her energies, terrifying in the thought of what she might have done with them if she had not submerged them in Helen.

I have never known [she says] the deep joy of surrender to my own, I cannot say genius, since I have not that immortal gift of the

gods—but to my own individual bent or powers. I have been compelled to pour myself into the spirit of another and to find satisfaction in the music of an instrument not my own and to contribute always to the mastery of that instrument by another.

How often I have been asked: "If you had your life to live over, would you follow the same path?" Would I be a teacher? If I had my life to live over I probably should have as little choice of a career as I had this time. We do not, I think, choose our destiny. It chooses us.

And destiny had chosen Helen to work for the blind. She would as willingly have worked for the deaf or any other group that needed her, but once embarked upon the work for the blind she found that she had very little time left for anything else. All over the world she has become their standard bearer, but most of the sightless consider the two women together. Most of them know that few have a better understanding of their needs than Helen's teacher, and most of them know that few have made greater contributions to their welfare. Because of this and because, whether she willed it or not, the whole of her life has been bound up with them, it seems not amiss to sketch briefly here the course of what has been done for the blind in the United States.

It is not always recognized that this is a comparatively new field of endeavour, not only here but throughout the world. Schools for the seeing were established before the dawn of recorded history; the first school in the world for the blind, the famous institute established in Paris by Valentin Haüy in 1781, is younger than the American Declaration of Independence.

The work was begun by the seeing and from the beginning has suffered from the inevitable mistakes of one group dealing with another that they do not understand. It is often said, and rightly, that a blind person is like a seeing person in the dark. He is motivated by the same hopes and fears and loves and ambitions, but in another sense there is a wide gap between the two (that is, the born blind and the seeing), and there is not, and

perhaps never will be, wit or wisdom enough in the world to bridge it over completely. To understand this it is only necessary to call in the testimony of the fortunate few, born blind, who have, through the skill of physicians, been given their sight after they reached maturity. Men like the Louisiana farmer who had his first sight at the age of forty and could not tell a square box from a round one by looking at them but could tell instantly by touching them. Women like the one of whom Sir Arthur Pearson tells whose eyes, as she lay on the operating table, came to rest on three little sparrows fluttering on the window sill. "Why," she cried, and these were her first words, "look at those three candle flames!"

Then there is Earl Musselman, the young man from the Pennsylvania Institute for the Blind at Overbrook, who, in 1931, at the age of twenty-two, was miraculously given sight by means of an operation. "The born blind," he says, "can be taught many marvellous things. But not the meaning of colour. You can say 'red' to them all day long. They in turn can learn to spell 'red,' to pronounce it, and memorize your description of it, but they cannot capture even an imaginary mental impression of colour because there is no way for them to identify it by the four senses they possess." When he went back to school his blind comrades repeatedly drew him aside and asked him to explain "the great mystery of sight." "You probably think I should have been able to explain sight, light, colour, and form to them in understandable terms. But I could not. I could explain sight only as a power that gave me an added capacity for happiness and the enjoyment of life." Expecting the blind to tell the seeing what blindness is, or the seeing to tell the blind what sight is, is like expecting the dead to tell the living what death is. It cannot be done. At least, it cannot be done with words.

The early teachers of the blind were not altogether aware of this. Annie Sullivan was one of the first fully to accept the fact that words are not reality and never can be. Instead of telling

Helen about butterflies, she caught butterflies and gave them to her. Birds, pigs, chickens, flowers, trees, stamps, clocks, dishpans, lawnmowers, ploughs, the list might go on forever—Helen learned by touching, not by merely hearing about. Mr. Edward Allen, an able teacher of the blind, instructor at the Perkins Institution, and, after the death of Mr. Anagnos, for many years its superintendent, was another who saw the value of contact with things, not words. It came about one day when he was trying to describe the muzzle of a gun to a class of blind students and one of the baffled students asked him if he did not have a gun that they could feel. "There was a gun in the outer room," Mr. Allen said, "as I knew very well, and I was teacher enough to get it then and there and to spend the rest of the recitation period in letting it describe itself."

Another handicap under which the education of the blind suffered in the beginning (and from which, alas, it still suffers) is pity. The idea of a school for them began with pity. Up to that time they had, with isolated exceptions like Homer and Tiresias and a few others, been considered on the whole unfortunate but amusing, and the antics of the actually blind had long been used on the stage for comic relief along with the antics of the actually insane. It was the sight of a group of blind men giving a burlesque musical performance at a street fair in Paris in 1771 that set Valentin Haüy to thinking that something might be done to improve their condition, and this compassion which began their education threatened soon to destroy it. People grew sentimental over them (they still do), endowed them with qualities they did not have, wept over them, coddled them into feeling benighted and abused, established sanctuaries for them and called the sanctuaries asylums, not schools.

Pity may be a virtue, but it is not a foundation. Nor is it apt to be practical. There are business men to-day who will shed tears over the blind but will not give them employment even in positions they are perfectly competent to fill. Blind musicians find it hard to secure engagements because managers feel,

rightly or wrongly, that audiences will be distracted from the melody by commiseration for the performer. Families will agonize over their blind children and with the best intentions and the deepest affection pet them into helplessness.

Practically all teachers know better than this now, but families do not. During the war Sir Arthur Pearson said, "I had sometimes to insist that a blind man's worst enemy was apt to be his own loving wife, or mother, or sister." There was a marked difference between the men who came straight to St. Dunstan's or Evergreen and set themselves earnestly to the business of learning to be blind and those who wasted precious weeks at home letting everything be done for them. No blind person ever knows how much he can do for himself until he is allowed to try.

And this was something else that Annie Sullivan never failed to appreciate when she was teaching Helen. Helen was never the "poor little thing" to her. She was an intelligent child to be encouraged to find out about the world for herself. What matter if she did scratch herself on barbed-wire fences? It wasn't serious, and she knew afterwards what barbed-wire fences were. All of the great blind have reached this gospel of independence, and nearly all of them are examples of how it works out in practice. Blindness came upon Sir Arthur Pearson when he was at the height of his active career as a publisher. He was a wealthy man and, so long as he was able to see, employed a valet to look after him. When blindness came he dispensed with this attendant because he felt that his services would be a stumbling block on his road to independence. Sir Arthur taught himself to be blind, and devoted the later years of his life to teaching others. His greatest work, the founding of St. Dunstan's, was not begun until after the total eclipse of his sight. Sir Francis Campbell, founder of the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind in London, is another heroic example of what a blind man trained to independence can do. Elizabeth Garrett, musician, blind daughter of the last of the great frontier

sheriffs, Pat Garrett, he who shot Billy the Kid, is a third, and there are many others.

The debt that both the blind and the seeing owe to these and other immortal figures in the world of the sightless is past all measuring. For the seeing they have the value of splendid inspiration; for the blind they have this, too, but to their own people they have made many contributions of a more substantial nature. It was a man with sight who began to teach the blind, but it was a blind man, Louis Braille, who in perfecting the point, or dot, type made their real education possible. Contrary to the popular belief, it was not Braille who actually invented the first point type, but a compatriot of his, a French army officer by the name of Charles Barbier. Barbier's system was complicated and unwieldy, and because of his military connection and because of the name given the system, *écriture nocturne*, it is believed that his aim was not to provide the blind with an alphabet, but to give soldiers a cipher which they could read in the dark. At any rate, the invention was of no practical use to the blind until after its transformation at the hands of Louis Braille.

Next to the work of Valentin Haüy, this work of Braille's marked the most important step forward ever made in the education of the blind, but because of the old difficulty in bringing the blind and the seeing together it led to the sorriest chapter in the whole history of this great movement. Braille's alphabet, built around a cell of six dots, did not to the seeing look like an alphabet. It bore no resemblance to the arbitrary symbols, a, b, c, etc., to which they were accustomed. But under the fingers of the blind, many of whom had never been able to make out the old line letters, it felt more like a real alphabet than anything they had ever had before. It was easy to read; it was even easy to write. The blind themselves could write it. But the seeing, hidebound in their prejudices, would not for a long time allow the blind to use it. All institutions are sluggish, and the one in Paris where the Braille type originated was no ex-

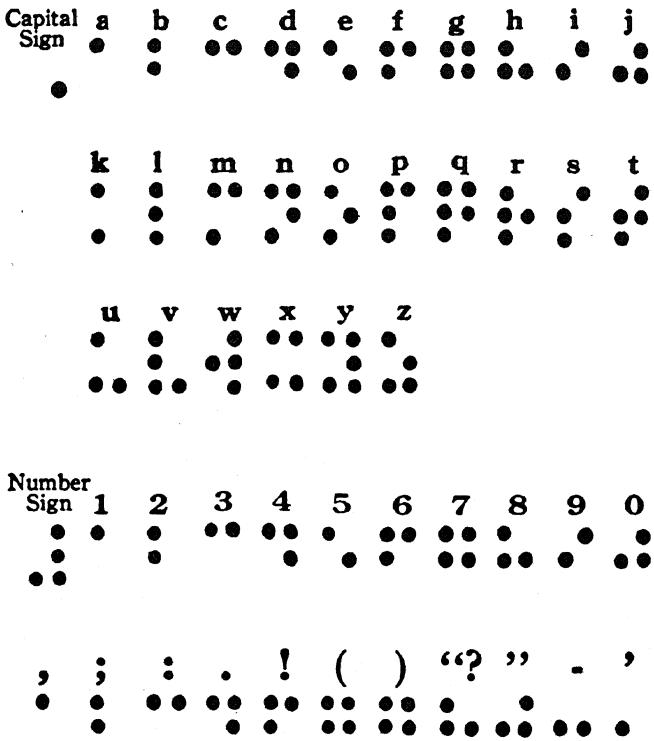
ception. The type was not adopted here until two years after the death of Braille.

Everywhere it went it met the same resistance. Its first official use in the United States was around 1860, and, curiously enough, not on the Atlantic seaboard, but in the Missouri School for the Blind in St. Louis. The pupils were delighted with it, but the other schools, where the old embossed types were entrenched, were slow to accept it. There were many technical shortcomings, a discussion of which has no place here, but it was so obviously superior to the old line types that pupils in nearly all of the schools began to get Braille slates by bootlegging them, and inventors, watching the movement, began to experiment.

One of these was Mr. William Bell Wait, superintendent of the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind who devised a dot system which he called New York Point. It was officially adopted in his school in the late 1860's. Another was a blind man, Joel W. Smith, who was head of the tuning department at the Perkins Institution when Annie Sullivan was a pupil there. Both systems derived from Braille. Mr. Smith's was called American Braille. It was officially introduced into the Perkins Institution about ten years after New York Point made its official début, and its introduction marked the beginning of the battle of the points.

Dr. Howe had always opposed any point system, and for many years his own line type, evolved from the alphabet of Valentin Haüy, was the only one allowed at the Perkins Institution. It was the only one that Laura Bridgman ever learned. Until Mr. Smith came forward with his adaptation of Braille, Mr. Anagnos followed in the steps of his distinguished father-in-law and permitted no points. And his conversion to American Braille did not mean that he saw any virtue in New York Point. Mr. Wait saw as little in American Braille. The institutions which were headed by these two gentlemen were the most influential in the United States. Other schools, for the most part,

BRAILLE ALPHABET AND NUMERALS USED BY THE BLIND



The Braille System is comprised of signs formed by the use of all the possible combinations of 6 dots numbered and arranged thus

1 ● ● 2
3 ● ● 4
5 ● ● 6

Letters made capital by prefixing dot 6. The first ten letters, preceded by the number sign, represent numbers. Punctuation marks are formed in the lower part of cell.

followed their lead, and it was not long before the country was divided into two hostile camps with about the same number of recruits. Neither could see any good in the other, and there was no way to bring them together. Feeling ran so high that the subject could not be discussed in open meetings. Both Helen and her teacher have listened to many of these incredibly venomous discussions.

About a dozen years after the struggle began, an epoch-making invention appeared which for the moment promised to bring harmony. This was the Hall Braille writer which did for the blind what the typewriter did for the seeing, and even more, for it released them from the tedium of the slate and stiletto. Theretofore they had been obliged to punch out separately every single dot in every single letter in every single word. This was the only way that Annie Sullivan ever learned. But with the Hall writer a blind person could dash out Braille almost as easily as a seeing person could dash out words on a typewriter. The invention was first exhibited in 1892 when Helen was twelve years old; she learned how to use it very soon afterwards, and has found it ever since an invaluable aid to her in her work. It was designed by the inventor, who had made a thorough examination of the two systems for the writing of American Braille, and this seemed to clinch the matter. But almost immediately a New York Point writer appeared. Fifteen years later, when the first raised print magazine in this country was established by Mrs. Matilda Ziegler and placed in the hands of the gentlest of editors, Mr. Walter Holmes, beloved of all the blind and all the seeing, who know him as "Uncle Walter," he found it necessary to print two editions of every issue, one in each system, a practice which he has been obliged to continue to this day!

In the meantime another point system, older than either of these, was gaining headway. This was the original Braille system, known in this country as European or British Braille. Its progress was not impeded by the personal animosities which

were bound up in New York Point-American Braille controversy, and it seemed briefly to offer a way out through compromise. The advocates of the two American systems could never be brought together, but they both might be persuaded to bury the hatchet and unite on the neutral ground of a third system. But the compromise was not made, and the fight continued.

Besides these three punctographic systems there were at least two important systems of embossing, Dr. Howe's Boston Line Letter or Line type, and the Moon type, invention of a blind man. This meant that a blind person who wished to read everything in raised print had to learn all of the systems, as if a child in our public schools were confronted with the necessity of learning three or four alphabets instead of only one. Annie Sullivan, at the Perkins Institution, learned two: American Braille and Line Type. Helen Keller, before she got through Radcliffe, learned five!

It would not have been so difficult if the alphabets had been as different as, let us say, the Greek and Latin alphabets, but they were all built out of dots, and there is a limit to what can be done with dots. Fixed in the Braille cell, six dots can be arranged in sixty-three different combinations; yet the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, the numerals, the marks of punctuation, capitals, and musical notations have to be represented. This means that even in a single system the same character is often used several times, according to whether it stands for a letter or a numeral or a note in the musical scale. The same combinations in the various systems were used for different characters. *Be* in British Braille is *is* in New York Point and *to* in American Braille. *Read* in New York Point spells *card* in American Braille. Only the letter *d* is common to all three systems. And it is almost impossible for one who knows all three to keep two of them entirely out of his mind when he is reading or writing the third.

It was, on the whole, the seeing who fought the battle, but it was the blind who paid for it. Books were printed in all of the

systems. The number of volumes, taken all together, was pitifully few compared with what the seeing had, and they were expensive. A book which cost a seeing person a dollar cost a blind person ten times as much. If all but one of the systems was abandoned it meant that all of the books except those in that system would eventually have to be destroyed. Money to make them had been hard to get; money to make new ones would be equally hard to come by.

Not one of the three systems was without merit, as a matter of fact, they were almost equal in merit, and the men who fought for them were honest in their belief that they were doing what was best for the blind. They were feeling their way; in a field where everything was new it was natural that they should find it hard to agree. Educators of the seeing do not always work in harmony, and their difficulties are not to be compared with those encountered by teachers of the handicapped. The history of the education of the deaf is as full of hard-fought battles as the history of the education of the blind.

Nor was the question of type the only one upon which the workers for the blind were divided. Until 1915, when the National Committee, later the National Society, for the Prevention of Blindness was established, there was no national organization in the field, unless the American Printing House for the Blind at Louisville, Ky., could be counted as such. And the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness was not interested in the *blind;* they were devoting themselves to the seeing who were in danger of passing over the border line. Until the publication in 1919 of *The Blind, Their Condition and the Work Being Done for Them,* by Harry Best, there had been, except in Massachusetts and New York, no adequate survey of the blind in this country. There were splendid private local agencies like the Lighthouses of Miss Winifred Holt (Mrs. Rufus Graves Mather) and they were doing valuable work, but, in general, the schools, workshops, and other units were isolated and provincial. Few workers knew what the others were doing. Services overlapped, and

yet certain classes of the blind, the adult blind, for example, were neglected in a way that Mark Twain called "purely shameful," and while a number of states had passed laws requiring the use of nitrate of silver in the eyes of all new-born children to prevent blindness from *ophthalmia neonatorum*, many of them did nothing to enforce the laws, and a number of others had not even taken the important preliminary step of getting a law on the statute books. The need, recognized by everyone intimately connected with the work, was for a national clearing house, a central organization, to bring the workers together, to prevent duplication and dissension, and to consolidate all efforts into national efficiency and power.

A small but important beginning was made in 1907, the year that saw the establishment of the *Matilda Ziegler Magazine*—a "banner year for the blind," Helen calls it—when Mr. Charles F. F. Campbell established the *Outlook for the Blind*, an inkprint magazine (now published also in Braille) which provided an open forum for the discussion of all phases of all problems connected with the work for the blind. Mr. Campbell had eminent qualifications as an editor. He is a son of the famous blind man from Tennessee, Francis Campbell, who was afterwards knighted by the King of England for his services to the blind of Great Britain through his establishment of the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind. He had received his training for the work under his father; and he was practical and diplomatic. The battle of the points continued in the pages of the *Outlook*, but under Mr. Campbell's tactful management the zealots began to speak more calmly.

It was in 1907 that national attention was called to the prevention of blindness in new-born children when Mr. Edward Bok opened the pages of the *Ladies' Home Journal* to a discussion of the subject and asked Helen to write an article; and it was in 1907 that the Uniform Type Committee made its first report. This famous committee was appointed in 1905 by the American Association of Workers for the Blind for the purpose of investi-

gating the three point systems to see if there was not some way to bring about unity. The most hopeful way seemed to be through the invention of a fourth system, if an inventor clever enough to make a better one could be found, but there was already a growing sentiment in favour of European Braille. It was in 1907 that Helen cried out in an article for *World's Work:*

> A plague upon all these prints! Let us have one system, whether it is an ideal one, or not. For my part I wish nothing had been invented except European Braille. There was already a considerable library in this system when the American fever for invention plunged us into this Babel of prints which is typical of the many confusions from which the blind suffer throughout the United States.

In its report for 1907 the Uniform Type Committee made no decision but recommended that it be allowed to continue its investigations. These investigations covered a period of nearly twenty years; the committee grew to a commission, and from first to last enjoyed the services of many of the ablest workers in this country for the blind. Some of the members were blind, some had sight. They came together in a spirit of coöperation, and this spirit, on the whole, they managed to maintain.

The blind members of the commission included Mr. H. Randolph Latimer, a well known educator, and Mr. Robert Irwin, both of whom were by virtue of their handicap thoroughly familiar with the obstacles in the way of the sightless and the little cruelties they have to endure at the hands of the seeing. The school that Mr. Irwin attended as a little boy in the State of Washington, for example, was called heartlessly enough and with a thoughtlessness that has since been outgrown, the Washington State School for Defective Youth. With a disregard of the special needs of each group characteristic of the early work for the blind everywhere, the school was established for the deaf, the blind, and the feeble-minded.!

All of the members of the committee were working heart and soul towards unity and coöperation, and it was one of them,

Mr. H. Randolph Latimer, president of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, who finally mapped out plans for the long-wished-for clearing house. He asked a number of leaders in various phases of the work to present papers at the annual meeting of the A.A.W.B. in Vinton, O., in 1921. In order to avoid the unprofitable wrangling which had characterized previous efforts, he asked each one "to treat his subject in an affirmative and constructive manner and to point out in what respect his particular branch of the work could be advanced by the coöperation of a properly organized general agency." Acting in this spirit it did not take long to make a beginning. Before the meeting was over a resolution was passed establishing the American Foundation for the Blind. The national clearing house was here.

The first president (he still holds this position) was Mr. M. C. Migel of New York City, who has taken an active interest in the blind ever since a never-to-be-forgotten evening more than thirty years ago when, wealthy and young and carefree, he passed by the Home for the Destitute Blind. The inscription over the door made no special impression when it first struck his eye, but as he walked on, it came back to him. Suddenly he realized what it might be like to be blind and destitute. He retraced his steps and entered the building, where he found someone reading a story to the blind inmates; they were laughing. It seemed to him a pleasant custom, and when he discovered that readers were scarce and that the home was almost as destitute as those it sheltered, he offered to do some of the reading if they would like to have him. Every Monday evening thereafter for fifteen years the young man turned aside from his other interests to visit his friends in the home. The blind were singularly fortunate in attracting his services, for in addition to the understanding which comes from wide sympathies, he brought the practical experience of a successful business man. He became head of the New York State Commission for the Blind. During the war he was given the rank of a major in the

Red Cross and asked to take charge of the rehabilitation of the blinded soldiers. Much of the work he carried on at his own expense, and it is due to him more than to anyone else that the Uniform Type Commission was able in 1932 to bring about the adoption of a uniform type throughout the English-speaking world, a type which is, ironically enough, almost exactly the one originally invented by Louis Braille!

The head of the Bureau of Research of the foundation, the purpose of which was to prevent duplication, to develop and standardize apparatus for the blind, to discover and make use of new fields of employment for them, to provide better literature, to make surveys, and to bring together in a readily available library the results of all the research that has already been done, was Mr. Robert Irwin who later became executive director of the organization. Mr. Latimer and Mr. Olin Burritt, principal of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, both of whom had rendered valuable service on the commission, were made trustees.

It was natural that these earnest workers for the infant clearing house should turn to that other great national clearing house, Helen Keller. Mr. Migel asked his secretary, Mrs. Amelia Bond, to get in touch with her. The Scottish voice which answered the telephone that day—Polly's voice—told Mrs. Bond that Helen was of course interested but that she could not at the moment do anything about it because she was going away on a vaudeville tour. Mrs. Bond was shocked into silence. Helen Keller in vaudeville! It was the last straw. All of them felt that it was the last straw.

But the foundation set diligently to work, financed in the beginning by Mr. Migel and his friends. In 1922 it absorbed the work of the Uniform Type Commission, took over the *Outlook for the Blind*, and began a systematic study of the needs of all classes of blind. By 1924 it had so justified its existence that it seemed to those who were managing it that the time had come to make an appeal to the public in its behalf. Once more Helen

was approached, and this time, since she was free from other entangling alliances, she happily joined her hands with theirs.

It meant that she and her teacher and Polly would have to campaign the country again; that they would have to force themselves to meet inconvenient schedules; it meant that Helen would have to do, in essence, what she had done many times before, except that where she had formerly appeared as a distinguished lecturer or vaudeville star she now appeared as a beggar. She was ashamed, and Mrs. Macy was indignant, that anyone should have to go begging for so noble a cause. Begging by the blind was deplored everywhere; begging for them was still an honourable (and necessary) profession. "It seems too much like house-breaking," Helen wrote once, "and I am ashamed of it. I can only hope that the people for whose good opinion I care will forgive me for what I am trying to do for the unhappy, dependent blind of America."

She and Mrs. Macy worked out the speeches and letters together, and the work was sweetened by the response it met from the public. Everyone was ready to help, children with their pennies, celebrities with their influence, and the wealthy with their checks. President Coolidge became honorary chairman of the campaign with Dr. Henry van Dyke as chairman. Edward Bok, Henry Ford and his son Edsel, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Mr. William Ziegler, son of the founder of the *Matilda Ziegler Magazine*, Joseph E. Widener, George Eastman, Felix Warburg, Mrs. Felix Fuld, and many others, made generous contributions. Churches and synagogues, schools and clubs, the Junior League, the Boy and the Girl Scouts, and many other organizations flung themselves into the work. The Lions, especially, made themselves the "knights" of the blind.

And Helen is their archpriestess. Wherever she goes she stands as a glorious symbol of what the blind can do. She is their master-spokesman, and she has a gift, the blind themselves say it, beyond that granted to anyone else in her sightless world, of interpreting the blind to the seeing in eloquent and

persuasive words. She has done it a thousand times, and her words have been taken all over the world, as one of the blind has expressed it, as their "battle cry on a thousand fronts."

The seeing have paid tribute to Helen's appeals for the blind with tears and words and, more practically, with money. Hundreds of examples of her eloquence might be cited, but one will be sufficient here. In 1906 she wrote a letter to Mark Twain when he acted as chairman of the first meeting of the New York Association for the Adult Blind. He read the letter aloud and afterwards reprinted it in his *Autobiography* with this introduction:

> I said that if I knew anything about literature, here was a fine and great and noble sample of it; that this letter was simple, direct, unadorned, unaffected, unpretentious, and was moving and beautiful and eloquent; that no fellow to it had ever issued from any girl's lips since Joan of Arc, that immortal child of seventeen, stood alone and friendless in her chains, five centuries ago, and confronted her judges . . . I said I believed that this letter, written by a young woman who has been stone deaf, dumb, and blind since she was nineteen months old, and who is one of the most widely and thoroughly educated women in the world, would pass into our literature as a classic and remain so.

Here are the paragraphs from the letter which deal with the blind:

> To know what the blind man needs, you who can see must imagine what it would be not to see, and you can imagine it more vividly if you remember that before your journey's end you may have to go the dark way yourself. Try to realize what blindness means to those whose joyous activity is stricken to inaction.
>
> It is to live long, long days, and life is made up of days. It is to live immured, baffled, impotent, all God's world shut out. It is to sit helpless, defrauded, while your spirit strains and tugs at its fetters and your shoulders ache for the burden they are denied, the rightful burden of labour.
>
> The seeing man goes about his business confident and self-dependent. He does his share of the work of the world in mine, in quarry, in factory, in counting room, asking of others no boon save

the opportunity to do a man's part and to receive the labourer's guerdon. In an instant accident blinds him. The day is blotted out. Night envelops all the visible world. The feet which once bore him to his task with firm and confident stride stumble and halt and fear the forward step. He is forced to a new habit of idleness, which like a canker consumes the mind and destroys its beautiful faculties. Memory confronts him with his lighted past. Amid the tangible ruins of his life as it promised to be he gropes his pitiful way. You have met him on your busy thoroughfares with faltering feet and outstretched hands, patiently "dredging" the universal dark, holding out for sale his petty wares, or his cap for your pennies; and this was a Man with ambitions and capabilities.

It is because we know that these ambitions and capabilities can be fulfilled that we are working to improve the condition of the adult blind. You cannot bring back light to the vacant eyes; but you can give a helping hand to the sightless along their dark pilgrimage. You can teach them new skill. For work they once did with the aid of their eyes you can substitute work that they can do with their hands. They ask only opportunity, and opportunity is a torch in darkness. They crave no charity, no pension, but the satisfaction that comes from lucrative toil, and this satisfaction is the right of every human being.

And yet, with all her superb abilities and all her endless service, Helen has not—this is as good place as any other to admit it—been entirely a blessing to the blind. Through no fault of her own, she has sometimes worked havoc with them. This is true of all eminently successful blind persons, and Mrs. Macy herself is no exception. Figures like Saunderson, the great English mathematician, Sir Francis Campbell, the great educator, Clarence Hawkes, the naturalist, and men prominent in public life like Senators Gore and Schall, are held up to blind children in the schools with the admonition that if they only put forth the effort they too can become Helen Kellers, Anne Sullivan Macys, Saundersons, Campbells, Hawkeses, Gores, and Schalls. Many a little blind girl of mediocre ability or of even greater natural ability than Helen Keller has been twisted out of her proper course of development in an effort to make

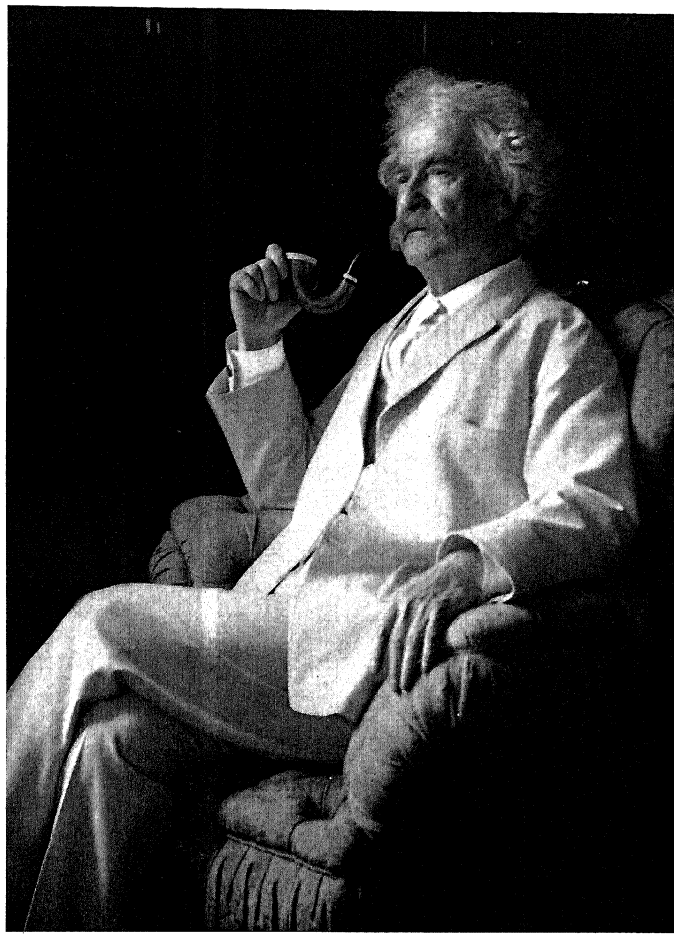
her another Helen Keller. The fingers of a dozen hands would not be sufficient to count the blind girls who, since about 1890, have been hailed as second Helen Kellers. Yet, as Dr. Richard Slayton French says in his study of the blind, *From Homer to Helen Keller:*

> Personality means precisely that there can be only one Helen Keller, and would-be imitators sacrifice their own possible personal development to become echoes, to become shadow personalities. False categories of worth drive mediocrity from its chances of real success into the surety of failure; good basket-makers are turned out indifferent musicians; the possibly successful broom-machine operator becomes an ill-qualified and starveling lawyer.

If education means anything, and there are still those who believe it does, it means that each person shall be taught to follow, as Annie Sullivan put it so many years ago, "the law of his being." If Helen Keller had been nothing more than a good broom maker, Annie Sullivan would in those early days have concentrated on broom making. She would not have stayed with Helen these forty and more years, for she would not have found her sufficiently interesting; but one may safely say that she would not have left her until she had taught her to be the best blind broom maker in the world.

In the meantime there was no profit to be had from worrying over the ill uses to which Helen's name was put. There was too much yet to be done, and the two women could help do it. They could interpret the blind to the seeing. They could tell the adult blind where to go for help, they could write encouraging letters to blind students in the colleges and tell them where to get books. They could recommend schools. They could explain that more than half of the blindness in children (according to the most reliable estimates this is the case to-day) could be prevented if the proper measures were taken; and they could urge parents for God's and humanity's sake to take those measures. They could urge the establishment of free clinics and state commissions with the power of the government behind

To Mrs. John Sullivan Macy, with warm regard,
+ with limitless admiration of the wonders she has performed
as a miracle-worker –



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Mark Twain

Stormfield, June. 11/09.

ANNE SULLIVAN MACY

them to enforce their mandates. Helen could speak to legislatures, could address Presidents, could find hearings in high and secluded places into the sacred precincts of which no voice but hers could penetrate.

Now that her teacher had helped her lay the foundation for it, she could go on with this work alone with the help of Polly Thomson to guide and interpret her. She was happy in doing it, and Mrs. Macy felt that, with the exception of one important task, her own life work was ended. This task was the completion of Helen's autobiography. Her publishers, Doubleday, Page & Co. (now Doubleday, Doran & Co.) had been begging Helen for some years to bring the story of her life up to date, and Helen, for the same number of years, had been promising to do it. Mr. F. N. Doubleday (Effendi) had written her several letters and had asked Mr. Lyman Beecher Stowe, a member of his staff who lived in Forest Hills, to call upon her to see if there was any way in which the firm could help. Mr. Stowe offered her the services of one of his editorial assistants (this was myself) to do whatever had to be done by a person who could see. Very soon after this I went to Forest Hills, and Mrs. Macy, Helen, and I made a tentative outline of what we should have to do if the time ever came when Helen could settle down to it.

No words can tell how the two women dreaded this book. Helen dreaded it because it was about herself, and she did not care to bring that subject up again. She dreaded it because it would interrupt work which she considered more important, and she dreaded it because she knew that even if she obtained a leave of absence from her work with the foundation she would still be denied the leisure and freedom which sustained literary work requires. Leisure is the one commodity which an otherwise generous and admiring world has always denied her.

No one but herself and her teacher (and John Macy, who was not there) knew how much work was involved. Since the Wrentham days there had not been time to save clippings from the newspapers, and they had lost many of those that Mr. Macy

had kept. Helen had only a few carbon copies of the thousands of letters she had written. She could not make carbons herself—they were too messy and smeared the original—and most of the time she had not had means to employ someone else to make them for her. Several tall cabinets filled with a disorderly accumulation of material stood ready. Some of it was in Braille; that Helen could read except where the friction of years had worn the dots down to a level with the rest of the paper. But most of it was in hand- or typewriting. Someone else had to read that, and because of its intimacy Mrs. Macy had to be the one—at least, she had to be the one to read it first. By this time she could not read at all with her naked eyes, nor with ordinary spectacles, only with the help of frequent drops and a pair of heavy double-lensed glasses (telescopic glasses, they are called), more like two small microscopes attached to her face than spectacles. Because of their weight and because of the strain she could even this way read for only a little while at a time.

And there was something else: the emotional side of the work. The years had been rich, but they had been painful. Sometimes it seemed as if they could not bring themselves to live through them again.

While they were trying to make up their minds to take the plunge, Helen yielded to the temptation, at the request of the Rev. Paul Sperry, pastor of the Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian) in Washington, D.C., to write another book, in which she was much more interested. This was the story of her love for the church of Emanuel Swedenborg which was later published under the title, *My Religion.* In writing this book Helen was singularly alone. Her faith, which had meant to her all that religion can mean to a deeply reverent soul, was not shared by anyone close to her now that Mr. Hitz was dead. To her teacher Swedenborg's gifted madness remained madness, not religion, though it seemed to Helen that anyone who studied that wonderful life "must become as humble as a little child." She was overwhelmed by the magnitude of her subject, but she

felt that any effort which might bring to someone else the peace that she had found in Swedenborg was worth making.

Mrs. Macy, as always, put aside her own desires to meet Helen's, and began spelling into her hand as industriously as if Swedenborg were the most important single subject in the world to her. She read long articles on the Swedish seer and the New Church in encyclopædias; she read Emerson's essay in which Swedenborg is considered as one of the "representative men"; she read extracts from the writings of others who had been influenced by Swedenborg's teachings, like Thomas Carlyle, Honoré Balzac, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Dean Howells, and the elder James, father of Henry the novelist and William the philosopher. Secretly, for herself she reread at the same time William James's *Talks to Teachers*.

Besides the ordinary interruptions from the outside there were at this time constant homely interruptions around the house, for Polly had gone to Scotland for a visit to her family, and the two women were taking care of themselves and Sieglinde. Mrs. Macy did the cooking and fed Sieglinde while Helen washed the dishes and made the beds. She swept the house while Helen checked the laundry list. She brought in flowers from the garden, and Helen, guided by their forms, not by their colours, arranged them in bowls and vases, beautifully and symmetrically. She read a smattering of the letters that came in, and Helen answered the most important ones. The others Mrs. Macy stuffed helter-skelter into closets and drawers whence Polly excavated them some months later. During Polly's absence the telephone and door bells did not make so much difference, for Helen could not hear them, and Mrs. Macy would not answer them.

The fact that they were alone in the house troubled their friends, but the two women felt safe with Sieglinde. This beautiful Great Dane, the loveliest of all Helen's dogs, deserves a whole chapter, almost a whole book, to herself. She had a reddish-

gold coat and uncropped velvet ears and was nearly as tall as a small pony. When her deep bark reverberated through the house Helen could feel its organ-like vibrations, and when she bared her teeth there was none bold enough to withstand her. Intruders deemed human aid powerless in the face of such an adversary and fled calling to God for help. Mrs. Thaw and some of their other friends thought her a dangerous animal, but she was, in reality, gentle with those she knew, and unlike some other dogs, always gentle with Helen. She had a way, infinitely touching, of resting her head on Helen's knees and turning her sad brown eyes towards the sightless blue ones of her mistress as if she were saying, "It is too bad, but you must not be afraid. I am here."

Sieglinde was born in Wrentham, and they had raised her from puppyhood. Mrs. Macy had taught her—it is always difficult to make people credit this—to say, "Ma-ma." Like other prima donnas, she was somewhat temperamental about saying it, but when Mrs. Macy called upon her and she responded in sonorous but unmistakable syllables, it did seem as if necromancy were at work in the house. People were sometimes frightened by it, and many of the reporters who saw and heard her felt that they had enough on their hands in making readers believe in Helen without adding the story of Sieglinde. The dog asked for water by pronouncing the word "Wah-ter." "Wah-ter" and "Ma-ma"—these two words were her repertoire.

She was getting old now and had to be taken care of like a child. She had her special blankets and insisted upon being tucked in at night. If she tossed them off in her sleep, she waked Mrs. Macy and asked her to put them on again.

Slowly, somehow or another, in the midst of all distractions, the reading was done and the manuscript grew. After some months there was a pile of it four or five inches high, typed on heavy yellow paper with Braille notations pricked in the corners of the pages with a hairpin so that Helen could tell in a general way what they were about. Mrs. Macy tried to read it and spell

it back to her so that she could see just what had been done (Helen had had so many interruptions that she was not sure) and what remained to do. But it was too late. Even with the telescopic lenses she could not force her eyes to make out the words.

In answer to further entreaties to Helen from Doubleday, Page & Co., Mrs. Macy explained their situation, and Mr. Russell Doubleday immediately released me from my other work to go to Forest Hills. I knew nothing about Swedenborg, and therefore could be of no special help to Helen, but I had good eyes and could read. Mrs. Macy and I went over the manuscript together. I read it aloud, and she spelled it to Helen. Under Helen's direction she and Polly and I pieced it together.

It was the intention of Helen and Mr. Sperry at first to have the book published by the New Church, but Helen had put so much of herself into it that it transcended the narrow limits of doctrine and was really what so many unworthy books have been called, a human document, deeply moving. Recognizing this, Mr. Doubleday was happy to add it to his general list; the book was accordingly published by Doubleday, Page & Co., on October 7, 1927.

Long before this we had begun digging into the autobiographical material. Helen was writing and Mrs. Macy and I were sorting. Polly had returned from Scotland and from a trip around the world with an uncle whose illness required her presence. I had learned the manual alphabet (incidentally no one really knows Helen who does not take the trouble to do this, and it is very little trouble) and we were all working at white heat.

Mrs. Macy's one hope was that her eyes would hold out to the end. They were of so little use to her and so pregnant a source of infection and pain that it seemed more than likely that they would have to be taken away from her. When she walked they were more of a hindrance than a help, for she kept fancying that she could see, and as a result kept stumbling.

Helen was far the more sure-footed of the two. So simple a thing as the expanse of a white tablecloth was blinding, and candles, when they were invited where these comely archaic decorations were used, were like so many swords piercing her eyeballs. Dr. Conrad Berens prescribed treatments and told her that she must follow them exactly. Above all, she must not, she absolutely must not, use her eyes.

But it was idle for him or me or anyone else to think we could stop her. When I was not looking, and even when I was, she was still reading. And it was remarkable how much she could see, how exact her impressions were of what she saw. She seemed to have a sense of divination—something entirely apart from the physical sense of sight. But the mortgage was foreclosing. Ruthless abuse of her eyes had always made her ill; now the illnesses were serious. When she went to bed and doctors and oculists were summoned the work came to a standstill. Helen was too worried to write and we had all grown to depend upon Mrs. Macy too much to think of going on without her. Then Sieglinde became ill. Everything stopped again. Then Sieglinde died.

The bitter, anxious days went by with Helen working whenever she found an opportunity, a day here, an hour there, sometimes nearly a whole week without serious interruption. The pile of manuscript grew until the one out of which we had built *My Religion* seemed a pigmy. We took the pages (hundreds of them) and the fragments that fluttered among them (thousands of them), fished out Helen's written directions, consulted her with our fingers, and pasted the story together. Then we had it typed and spelled it back to her. Parts of it were not satisfactory; she rewrote them. She remembered parts that must be added and wrote them. We took scissors and pins and paste and put it together again. We had it typed once more. Then we spelled it back to Helen.

It was hard for us, but infinitely harder for Helen. After the manuscript left her typewriter she knew it only as it came

back to her through our fingers. She could not, like another author, run rapidly through the pages, shifting here and rearranging there. She was obliged to tell us how to arrange it, and then have us spell it back to her so that she could see if it was the way she wished to have it. We worked most of the time in a triangle. I read with my eyes while Mrs. Macy spelled with her fingers, and Helen gave directions. Polly acted as housekeeper, manager, watchdog, and general substitute in all capacities. Physically it was hard work, and the main burden of it fell upon Mrs. Macy.

It was early in the spring of 1928 that we saw light break ahead and knew that if we hurried we could finish before hot weather came. After that we raced with time. It was not the heat we dreaded so much as spelling to Helen in the heat. Continuous spelling in winter was arduous enough, but our hands were cool and slick and could move rapidly; in summer they were hot and damp, the work dragged, and our minds were distracted from what we were spelling by the sheer fatigue of spelling it.

The four of us were sitting in the living room in Forest Hills late one afternoon in May when Mrs. Macy spelled the last words of the last draft of the book, *Midstream,* as Helen had called it, into the author's hands, and we knew that the manuscript was ready to go to the printer. We had all looked forward to this moment. We had thought to have a sense of abounding relief and satisfaction, but no such feeling came. We were too tired. We sank back in the sunset of that late May afternoon and gave ourselves up to the heavenly feeling of being as tired as we wished to be. Melancholy descended upon us, and we grew maudlin and a little dizzy. But it lasted only a few minutes. The telephone rang imperiously with a request for Helen to make a speech in Boston, the door bell rang to admit two friends from Wrentham, life clicked back into place, and we all set to work again.

Mrs. Macy, Helen, and Polly spent the summer in a hunter's

cottage on a little island not much bigger than the cottage itself, near Cohasset, Mass., and it was here on a memorable night in August that we finished reading the galley proofs to Helen. A storm raged outside, and the waves beat against the cement wall which kept the cottage from slipping out to sea,[1] but peace reigned within. Helen knew that she would never have to do anything like this again, and Mrs. Macy felt that she was through. The eyes had lasted. After their fashion they had lasted.

Helen said very little. It was the next morning while she was washing the dishes that she interrupted herself long enough to come into the living room to deliver her ultimatum. She threw the wet dish towel over her shoulder, fumbled a moment until she found a chair, took firm hold of its wooden back, and spoke like Ahasuerus delivering the law to the Medes and Persians: "I just want to say this," and she pronounced the words carefully so that there could be no mistaking her meaning. "I just want to say this: There will be no more books. I put the best years of my childhood and youth into *The Story of My Life.* I have put the best years of my womanhood into *Midstream.* There will be no more books."

[1]No idle phrase. A year or two later this actually happened. Neither the cottage nor the land on which it stood is there now.

CHAPTER XXI

Unwilling Gipsy

While Helen was still at work on *Midstream* Dr. Frederick Tilney, neurologist of the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons and the New York Neurological Institute, author of *The Brain from Ape to Man* and other studies of the human brain, began a series of experiments with her to test her sensory equipment. All of her life Helen has at intervals submitted to similar examinations, not only because she is polite and good-natured, but also because she has hoped that some benefit to the blind or the deaf might come out of them.

It is the popular notion that Helen's hands are far more sensitive than those of the average person, and though it has been proved time and again by means of exact scientific instruments that they are not, the notion persists. There is some justification for it. There is an awareness about those hands, an alertness, even when they are lying on her lap, which makes them different from other hands; it is not with a movement of her lips that she enters a conversation but with a movement of her hands to find out whether someone else is talking or not. It is not with her eyes that she reads, but with her hands, not with her eyes that she guides herself, but with her hands. It is those two hands, short and rather stubby, essentially no different from any others, that have brought her nearly all she knows of the world, and there is about them always an expression of indescribable pathos, struggle, and infinite knowledge.

Many of the experimenters who have come—"my scientific tormenters," Helen has called them—have brought preconceived theories, and often Mrs. Macy, a complete realist in such

matters, has been the only barrier between them and a series of inaccurate conclusions. Dr. Tilney began his work with the conviction that Helen's sensory equipment was vastly superior to that of the average person, but since he, too, is a realist, he set out to prove it. This took many long afternoons in the winter of 1927–28, but the results were interesting and, so far as they went, may be considered definitive.

He found the sense of taste "moderately preserved" and in no way remarkable, rather under than above that of the average person. Helen and her friends had always thought that her sense of smell possessed of a keenness comparable to that of an animal or an Indian, but—

> . . . when tested objectively [says Dr. Tilney], Miss Keller's olfactory sense shows nothing above the normal average. Seven aromatic substances were used in these tests, including alcohol, oil of wintergreen, peppermint, formaldehyde, eucalyptus, asafetida, and valerian. It may be said that the fundamental pathway for the sense of smell in Miss Keller has absolutely no advantage over that of the normal adult individual. The sense of taste similarly showed no advantage in its fundamental organization. Concerning the sense of sight it may be said in summary that Miss Keller is totally blind and has been in that condition since her ninteenth month. She has neither light nor object perception. Examination reveals the fact that there is no retina present, and she is therefore deprived of the primary conduction paths for visual sense. With reference to the sense of hearing, Miss Keller is completely deaf, having neither bone nor air conduction in either ear. Concerning her bone conduction, some question might arise, inasmuch as she is conscious of vibratory impression. This, however, is in all probability not due to her auditory sense, but rather to an extraordinary development of her vibratory sensibility.

In other words, as Dr. Tilney, Dr. James Kerr Love, and others have found out, Helen's situation is exactly that of any ordinary intelligent person who might be forced to get along without his eyes and ears. Like everyone else who has made this discovery about her, Dr. Tilney was even more impressed than

he had been with what she had been able to accomplish, and more impressed than ever with her teacher.

> All the glory of this mind [he says, speaking of Helen] is the fruit and product of another great woman, Miss Helen's incomparable teacher. By her intelligence, courage, and enthusiasm, Mrs. Macy has made a distinguished personage of a deaf and dumb and blind little girl; and far more than this, she has shown the world how completely good and wise teaching may release the human mind from the bonds of ignorance.

Incidentally, the special electrical apparatus which was prepared for the tests with Helen led to the development of a vibratory mechanism (Henney's Pallas-Aesthesiometer) for locating the exact position of tumors on the spinal column. But the work, extensive as it was, did not, of course, conclude the examination of Helen's brain. How its actual physical development differs from that of other brains, how especially it differs from that of Laura Bridgman, can hardly be determined while the brain is still in the skull.

In June, 1929, while Helen was making a speech in Boston, Dr. Conrad Berens operated upon Mrs. Macy's right eye. When the operation was over—the last that she will ever have on that eye—the three women went to a cottage in the woods four miles down Long Lake in the Adirondacks. They came back to a busy winter of work for the American Foundation for the Blind, and the next summer, having found that the Adirondacks were not sufficiently remote to provide relief from the burden of requests, Helen and Mrs. Macy decided for the first time in their lives to leave the United States for a vacation abroad.

They had often been invited to go. Sir Francis Campbell offered several times to pay their expenses if Helen would come over to visit him at the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind. He promised to introduce them to members of the royal family and assured them that His Excellency, the American ambassador, Mr. Choate, would do everything he could to make the visit successful and pleasant. He once wrote

to Dr. Bell asking him to urge them to come, and Dr. Bell went so far as to offer to go with them, but this was while Helen was still in school and it did not seem wise to her teacher to interrupt her studies for even so tempting a journey. Dr. James Kerr Love repeatedly asked them to come to Scotland to address the British Medical Association, the National Association of Teachers of the Deaf, or some other organization working with the deaf or the hard of hearing. He and Sir Francis both wished Helen to appear because of the inspiration that her presence might lend to the deaf and the blind and their teachers. Helen, they said, belonged to the world; America should not be selfish about it.

It was not as a guest that Helen wished to go in 1930, but incognita, alone with her teacher and Polly. If Mrs. Macy's other eye was to be saved she must have rest. This was the first objective. But there was another reason why Helen preferred not to be in the United States that summer. June 27th was her fiftieth birthday, and she had no desire to take part in the celebrations which were planned, no desire "to have to wear a company smile and make a silly speech about feeling fifty years young."

It took the combined efforts of a squadron of Mrs. Macy's friends, coupled with the commands of Dr. Berens, to persuade her to leave Forest Hills. They were finally rewarded by having her consent to go and flouted by having her cancel the passage a few hours before the ship was set to sail. They renewed the attack, finding an able ally in Helen, and this time were more successful. The three women sailed on the *President Roosevelt* on the first of April without knowing where they were going except that they were to land in Plymouth. They hoped sometime during the course of the summer to touch the shores of Ireland in the hope of finding out something about Mrs. Macy's parents, for this book was under way, and we were trying to locate every possible bit of information.

We had already gone back to Feeding Hills, Mrs. Macy,

Helen, Polly, and I, but we learned little there that Mrs. Macy did not already know, except that her father had not realized his bright hopes of making his fortune digging ditches in Chicago. What went on in the mind of the young Irishman as he saw disaster closing in upon him and remembered his wretched children in the poorhouse in Massachusetts one can only guess, but it was too much for him. He finally ended it with his own hand. The Sullivans who were left in Feeding Hills—there were dozens of them—shrank from talking about him. But all the bitterness and anger in his daughter's heart were burned away, and she has remembered him since as she loved him, laughing and singing and telling stories of Ireland.

When she and Helen and Polly arrived in Plymouth they found that Polly's sister had engaged a retreat for them in the village of Looe in Cornwall—

> . . . a wee nest [as Helen wrote Mr. F. N. Doubleday (Effendi)] high up on a great cliff overhanging the Looe River which divides the village into two parts. We are on the west side. I wish you could see how deliciously cosy and idle we are. The bungalow has three bedrooms and a sitting room full of comfortable chairs, lounges, and cabinets filled with old copper and old china.

They stayed here about two months.

> We have moved about a great deal [this again from Helen's letter to Mr. Doubleday], and seen nearly all of Cornwall many times. We have lunched, tea'd, and dined at charming old inns, and picnicked on the moors with the birds hopping about the tablecloth and picking up crumbs between songs. We have paid our respects to the King Arthur country. We have zigzagged through many villages with narrow streets which are more like gangplanks than streets, and visited countless ancient churches, tiny, quaint taverns and holy wells, and spent no end of delightful hours in the lanes winding in and out, up and down, twisting round the green fields and sunny pastures where cows and sheep graze. . . .

In June they sailed for Ireland on a freight boat delightfully christened the *Bally Cotton* and landed in Waterford. Mrs. Macy

had been enchanted with England ("That horrid old England, she is so beautiful!"), but from the moment she set foot on its soil she was disquieted by Ireland. Feelings with their roots trailing back through centuries of rebellion surged through her, and she found herself with clenched hands, fiercely and passionately hating England ("You need not tell me it is unreasonable. I know it is unreasonable"). Vague memories of her father's stories lingered in her brain to tantalize her, but the clues appeared only to disappear. She felt a raw sensitiveness when Helen and Polly lightly discussed the country, yet she could not rise to defend it. She found it drenched in poverty, shabbiness, and dirt. The rusty black shawls of the women, the dragging feet of the men, the gaunt sides of the poor little sombre donkeys, the sun which came into Ireland "timidly, as if unwilling to look on so much woe," were a source of pain.

I hate its poverty and melancholy, its heroes and its martyrs [she wrote]. All the time a fierce ache gnaws my heart similar to the ache I have when I hear the sea at night and its moan keeps me awake. The bogs influence me strangely. The weird rocks on the hillsides watch me, and their expression is intense. I find myself waiting for them to speak, and deep down in my soul I know their message will break my heart. Every chord struck in Ireland has a sigh in it.

They drove from Waterford past the high walls of the estate of the Duke of Devonshire and through Killarney, stopping for a picnic lunch on the ruins of the house in which Daniel O'Connell was born, past desolate bog lands and rocky bare hillsides, until Mrs. Macy was brought at last—

. . . with a great jump in my heart, to the river Shannon, in the busiest part of Limerick—the Shannon I had seen in my night- and day-dreams since my childhood. Why does not one say or do something unusual at such moments? When one comes to an utmost emotion, one sits quiet and says inanely, "So this is the Shannon." Nothing more significant came to my tongue.

I stood in the little white chapel at Cratloe [across the Shannon] in County Clare and wondered if my parents had been christened and married there. The countryside is very poor and nearly deserted. The river flows like a blue ribbon through the green fields, and the old castle stands grim and threatening "on the threshold of quiet."

She asked at several churches about her parents, but she did not know to which parish they had belonged and was able to learn nothing. The records in Limerick did not go farther back than 1860, and Thomas Sullivan and Alice Chloesy had by that time already left Ireland.

She found the priest at Cratloe building a grotto like the one at Lourdes in the hope that miracles would be performed. The natives were giving their strong arms to the work, and visitors were giving donations. It was pleasant for her to think, as she gave hers, that her parents would have been helping if they had been there.

But the feeling of gloom persisted.

There is nothing in the world, it seems to me, like the sadness that prevails in parts of Ireland. It is the accumulated sadness of centuries of hunger, evictions, and emigrations.

It is impossible for anyone in whose veins flows Irish blood to stand on the quay of any port in the country without heartache and tears. For countless thousands have boarded ships there, leaving forever the land of their birth. There broken-hearted mothers have hung upon the necks of young sons and daughters in a last embrace . . . clearly, oh, so clearly, I heard my father bidding his father and mother good-bye, clinging to them until the ship pulled them apart and bounded out to sea.

These ports are wounds that Ireland cannot stanch. From them pours a constant stream of her best and strongest blood. Rooks cawing and circling about the quays—are they the souls of the unhappy emigrants returning at last to their native shores?

The grandeur of the country is founded on homesickness.

She said to a waiter in a hotel where they were dining that she had not seen anyone smile since she came to Ireland.

"Ireland, madam," he responded dolefully, "will never smile again."

But there were happy days waiting for them again in England, where for the remainder of the summer they stayed in an old house, Trout Hall, in the village of Wendens Ambo in Essex.

On July 27th, a month after her birthday, "which was solemnized in Ireland by taking a long walk on Bray Head, a rocky spur of the Wicklow Mountains," Helen wrote to me:

One curious phenomenon of advancing age is a growing wanderlust. I am eager to see the world before I am gone from it. That is why we didn't return to America the end of May, as we had at first planned. The spell of Britain was upon us, and I thought we might as well wear our garments of enchantment as long as possible, and forget the straitjacket of routine and publicity which Teacher and I have worn the best part of our lives. . . .

Since July 1st we have been settled here in Essex. Trout Hall sounds very grand, doesn't it? Well, it isn't a castle or a palace or a mansion, it is a delightful country house, not particularly handsome but comfortable. It is four hundred years old. I am writing this letter in the old sitting room. The ceiling is very low, and the floor undulates like the deck of a ship. There is a great fireplace at one end, and at the other a large casement window which lets in all the sun there is. It has rained almost continuously for a week; but really we can't complain; for the weather has been glorious ever since we landed the middle of April. The rain was badly needed. The crops were beginning to suffer from the drought, and our flowers were athirst for sweet showers. The swifts build nests under the eaves which I can easily reach, and they make a great fuss when I come too near them. When they are disturbed, they fly about like a flurry of snow, filling the air with the beating of their wings and a queer, whining sound. I love to sit on the window sill and read, while the fragrance of box, roses and sweet peas comes up to me. The sitting room overlooks the sweetest English garden you can imagine.

I have a wonderful walk halfway round the garden. I start at the front door and find a large laburnum tree whose branches hang over the lawn, and which must be a glory in the spring. Then I go along touching shrubs, ivied walls, arbor vitae, box hedges and rose-

bushes to the giant sycamore tree (under which we have afternoon tea) and back again. I have never had such a long walk to myself. I almost forgot to say that the high wall encloses the place, so we are quite secluded. In the middle of the driveway is a great walnut tree which must be as old as the house, if not much older. The vegetable garden is separated from the driveway by a laurel screen, and from the lawn and flower gardens by box hedges. The main paths are entered through rose bowers. The central path leads down through the vegetable garden and orchard to a lovely stream with a rustic bridge and two rows of noble trees which droop over the water, forming a green canopy.

The gardener and his wife live in the gate-cottage, and look after the place—they go with the place. I don't know what you would say to our kitchens. They are in the old part of the house, and oh, Nella, they are immense! And they are as inconvenient as they are big. All the arrangements for preparing and cooking food are primitive. Fortunately, we have two native girls who work under Polly's direction, and who have never known the modern conveniences. All this comfort and beauty and service we have for only forty-five dollars a week! Don't you think we should all come over here to live the remainder of our lives? Think it over.

And, after all, it isn't so much the material advantages as the atmosphere we care about. The spirit of quiet reigns in these quaint rural villages of England. They haven't changed in centuries, every one is himself or herself, the same as it was in the beginning. We dare to be dull, to ignore time, to spend evenings that seem like eternity secure from visitors in a world where there are no uncertainties. The birds sing the same notes people have heard so many times before, the bees drone on for aeons, the flowers bloom, and the trees grow larger, and nobody seems to care. The sun shines upon pleasant faces and natural hearts. The cottages are snug, if primitive. Just thirty-nine miles away is London with its worries about unemployment and decadence, India, and Egypt, a budget which nobody likes, and no end of awkward questions that keep one awake and start all sorts of ideas howling about one's ears! Here we sit cosy, untroubled, lazy, sipping tea and eating buttered scones, gooseberries and pink salmon from Scotland and roast lamb from the farm across the hedge. . . .

Teacher is glad now that we carried her off to Britain. There are still times when she worries about her eye, but on the whole she is improving in health and spirits.

The sentiments in the first part of this letter of Helen's may be contrasted with these paragraphs from her teacher, written in Brittany the following summer:

> Padraic Colum thinks the roving spirit is in the blood of the Irish. I do not know, but I haven't it. I am not a happy traveller, and I never enjoy the prospect of going to a strange country. Continually stumbling upon the unexpected wearies me, and being held up by the unknown exasperates me. The roving spirit of the Irish, always seeking a lost haven of peace, makes my bones ache.
>
> I have all their waywardness, their fitful tempers and erratic desires, but my sails are never set for flight willingly. Every roll of the waves that bear me away from the familiar haunts of my habitat pile up resentments and anxieties in my heart as they pile up seaweed on the coasts of Brittany. I hope my voyages have now come to an end. Every moment I hear the call of the Virginia creeper at my attic window, and behind the window I see my books and my comfortable bed.

But her feeling for Helen was stronger than any desire to remain at home. When they came back from Cornwall in 1930 it was to an unusually heavy winter of work for the blind, for the Foundation had made arrangements to have the first world conference on the blind meet in New York City in April, 1931. The plans were made and the invitations issued by President Hoover early in 1930 before the seriousness of the economic depression had made itself felt. Blind and seeing delegates and guides and interpreters were coming from China and Japan, Australia and New Zealand, India and South Africa, Egypt, Italy, Uruguay, France, Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, and some twenty-odd other countries. Mr. Migel was chairman of the committee on arrangements, with Mr. Irwin acting in an executive capacity. Plans were made for entertainments, for visits to schools and workshops, for round-table discussions, for consideration of every problem connected with the welfare of the millions of blind persons throughout the world.

Helen helped raise money. She made a speech of welcome to

the delegates and flew to Washington to present them to President Hoover. She gave a reception for them and attended innumerable functions. Mrs. Macy made only one official appearance when she delivered an appreciation of the work of Mr. Edward E. Allen at a dinner given in his honour by Mr. Migel. All of the delegates were invited. The dinner was on the occasion of Mr. Allen's retirement from the Perkins Institution, where for more than forty years he had served as one of the most faithful and valuable of all the friends the blind have ever had in this country.

The discussions at the conference were carried on in a Babel of tongues and the Filene-Findlay system of instantaneous translation which had been tried out in a sub-conference of the League of Nations was employed for the first time at an international conference. Countries where the blind were regarded with indifference were awakened to a new sense of responsibility towards their sightless citizens, and countries, like those in which Spanish is spoken, where the confusion of types is greater than it has ever been in the United States, were given a hope that unity might be achieved. The entire gathering marked distinct and encouraging progress in international as well as national coöperation, and though the delegates have scattered, the spirit of mutual helpfulness has remained.

As soon as the meetings were over, the Forest Hills trio sailed once more for Europe, once more without knowing where they were going except that they were to land at Cherbourg. This trip was Helen's idea. Cornwall the summer before had been more of a success than she had dared to hope, and they would have gone back to Cornwall except that Sieglinde's place in Mrs. Macy's heart had been taken (as much as it could ever be by another dog) by a little black Scottish terrier named Darky, and the quarantine regulations were such that he could not be carried into the British Isles. He had been in the hospital and none of the three women was willing to leave him behind. They carried him over on the *Leviathan*—they went as guests of the

United States Lines—and a few weeks later their friends discovered that they were in Brittany.

From a letter of Mrs. Macy's to Nella Braddy:

"Ker Loar," Concarneau, Brittany
June 9, 1931

DEAR NELLA,

I dreamed about you last night. We seemed to be in the little office upstairs at Forest Hills, and, as usual, you had a pile of manuscript in front of you. You began to read aloud, and the thought came to me, I have given her the Porto Rico letters[1] by mistake! Helen will never forgive me. You said "At last" in such a natural voice that I woke up, still feeling troubled. I told Helen my dream this morning, and she said, "Why, that's just what you would do if I let you have the letters."

The troubled feeling of the dream is replaced by a lively wish to write to you. In order that this wish may not die, as a thousand other wishes like unto it have departed this life without leaving a sign that they ever existed, I have commandeered Helen and her "Remington" to help me give this one visibility.

Come to think of it, I don't believe I have written you a life-size letter, have I? It's enormously strange if I haven't. But, as always, I will let myself off with the defense that Helen has written, and everybody would rather get a letter from her than from me. . . .

We landed at Cherbourg in five days and a half. The U. S. Lines had a representative to meet us. Otherwise I don't know how we should have managed the baggage—two trunks, a hat-box, a shoe-bag, four large suitcases, three small suitcases, three rugs, three extra coats and a dog! I believe there was a man for every piece of luggage, all talking at the top of their voices and gesticulating wildly as they proceeded with our possessions to the depot, just a few steps from the quay, where the Paris train was waiting. We sent everything by train, except Darky, and motored through Normandy to Paris. There was nothing to see on the way but green pastures, cows, apple-blossoms, lilacs and gorse. The few peasants we met were

[1]These were the letters that Mrs. Macy wrote Helen in 1916-17. They were in American Braille, and I, who know only British Braille and that slightly, could not read them. Helen loved the letters, but was a little ashamed of the mistakes which her teacher, counsellor of perfection, made in writing them. It took us some time to persuade her to copy them, and when she did she corrected the errors in spelling.

seated high up on two-wheeled carts, with one horse in front of the other. They scarcely glanced at us. I guess they felt towards us as the Lancashire folk do when they say, "Here's a stranger, heave a brick at him!"

It rained and blew and misted and was cold as Iceland the first half of the journey. . . . From Caen on we had sunshine and enjoyed ourselves mildly. I haven't any thrilling or throbbing items to report. I haven't seen any such beauty as in Cornwall. The peasants appear stolid. The old ones look as if they had ached and groaned for the little they get out of life. They have no morbid taste for comforts or cleanliness or amusements. They are very much as they were before the French Revolution—shaped and hardened under the rule of a ruthless aristocracy. They still wear wooden shoes. The men wear black velvet bonnets with strings hanging down the back, and the women wear fantastic headdresses of hand-made lace of which they are very vain, and silk aprons when they dress up.

The Humbert Tourist Service found this little villa for us in Concarneau. It is small, everything about it is smaller—the garden, the rooms and the bathtub—the oddest shape, tall and narrow, extremely hazardous to one of my bulk. The towels aren't much larger than Keith's handkerchiefs, and not much more substantial. We are only eighty feet from the ocean. . . .

We are ideally situated, granting the proposition that we don't want to see anybody or go anywhere. If we didn't have work to do, I doubt if we could stand it all summer. Motoring is terribly expensive, and anyway there isn't much to see. The distances are like those of the Middle West—long, long tiresome roads and tiny, uninteresting villages, except near the sea, where they are colourful and very attractive to artists.

The weather goes from bad to worse—the "*déluge en permanence*" with so much wind and fog, and a consequent confinement to the house, which is very depressing. Helen gets out nearly every day but comes in dripping.

The sunlight which unexpectedly flooded the countryside in the morning of their arrival in Concarneau deceived them into signing up for the villa for three months. Whereupon the sun disappeared and did not come back again. Helen spent the days struggling with her correspondence and typing out the Porto Rican letters until late in June, when the postman de-

livered an official envelope bearing an invitation for the three of them to come to Yugoslavia as guests of the kingdom for the purpose of arousing interest in the work there for the blind. They left Concarneau on June 27th (Helen's birthday) and a few days later found themselves in the middle of as turbulent a programme as they had ever survived in the United States.

Before they reached Belgrade their train was boarded by Mr. Ramadanovitch, director of the school for the blind at Zemun, a reporter from the *Pravda*, the leading newspaper in the city, and an interpreter. At the station they were welcomed with music and flowers and a speech (in perfect English) by a Colonel Lovrick, who had been blinded in the war. Tiny blind Serbian children in native costume, who had been taught word by word, sang an astonishing version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" (this also in English), and the three visitors were escorted grandly to the hotel to make themselves ready to go to the State Department to be officially received.

The programme for the first day included a drive around the city with a visit to a museum and to the barracks of the King's Guards. Luncheon was served at the hotel. In the afternoon they were taken for a visit to the Orphans' Home and Hospital, and to a meeting at the University, where Helen addressed an audience of more than two thousand. She spoke in English, Polly repeated her words to one of the professors, and he translated them into Serbian for the audience. The difficulties of communication did not lessen the enthusiasm of the occasion; spirited plans were launched for a drive for a Helen Keller fund to provide better educational facilities for the blind of Yugoslavia. Dinner began in the evening at nine o'clock with fifty persons present, on board a Danube River boat, the *Queen Marie*, gaily decked with Serbian and American flags, and lasted, with speeches in English and Serbian and translations back and forth, until after midnight.

The programme for the second day began when they were driven, with reporters, interpreters, soldiers, and a miscel-

laneous following, to a "serene place high up on a mountain" outside Belgrade, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Helen planted a wreath and made a speech. The equipage continued through the mountains until they came to the tomb in Oplenac, where the King who freed Serbia from the Turks lies buried. Helen planted another wreath and made another speech. An elaborate Serbian luncheon was served in a mountain inn still farther along the way, and it was while they were here that word came from Belgrade that His Majesty King Alexander would receive them that afternoon at five-thirty. They were already scheduled for an appearance at the school for the blind in Zemun and for a banquet in the evening given in Helen's honour by the Federation of Women's Clubs. But the King's commands took precedence over everything—except over the photographers who stopped them in the courtyard of the inn, the long stretch of road under construction, and the flat tire which delayed them on the way back to the city. Dusty and dishevelled, they arrived at their hotel at twenty minutes after five, changed their clothes as quickly as they had ever done in vaudeville, dashed into the King's waiting automobile, and ten minutes later, at exactly half-past five, presented themselves at the summer palace!

Alexander welcomed Helen as one whose story he had known for many years. He told her in French, while an interpreter relayed the words to Polly, who gave them to her, that her visit to Yugoslavia would do much to stimulate interest in the blind. They exchanged polite commonplaces for a few minutes, and then the King did what everyone does. He asked Mrs. Macy to show him just how she had taught Helen, just what means she used for communication, and just how it was possible for Helen to understand what she said, and Annie Sullivan, child of the Tewksbury almshouse, stood in the royal presence with the grace of a duchess and showed him. "*C'est merveilleux!*" the King exclaimed several times. "*C'est merveilleux!*" The following summer, when they were presented at Buckingham Palace, the King

of England made a similar request and, in English, made almost the identical response: "Extraordinary! Extraordinary! And all through vibration." Mrs. Macy had expected some momentous words from herself when she came to the river Shannon, and she had expected words of royal flavour from the kings. But the response was the same. Wherever Helen appeared, before kings or commoners, it was always the same: "*C'est merveilleux!*"

After the interview with King Alexander, which lasted until nearly half-past six, the day telescoped into a confusion of Serbian and English and weariness. They went, not exactly as scheduled, to the school in Zemun, and they went, nearly three hours behind schedule, to the banquet of the Federated Clubs and listened to speeches until far into the morning.

At Zagreb the ovations were as lively and the programme as crowded. Here they visited the Rockefeller Institute of Public Hygiene. Helen spoke at the university in behalf of the blind, and they all three attended a banquet given in their honour by the Woman's Humanity Association, where speeches in two languages lasted from eight o'clock until midnight.

At Ljubljana they were greeted by the deaf. A little deaf girl gave Helen a basket of flowers, while greetings from the others were extended by one of the teachers. At the State Building she was presented with an autographed photograph of King Alexander royally framed in gold. In the evening she made a speech for the deaf at the academy.

They were in Yugoslavia a week, and, accustomed as they were to American vehemence, they were somewhat overpowered by their gala progress through this beautiful mountain country. Less sane and less truly sensitive women than Helen and her teacher would have been so depressed by the foundation of blindness and deafness upon which it was built that they could not have enjoyed it, but these two had known for many years that merely being depressed about a situation does not help it. And they were there to help.

MRS. MACY AND HELEN KELLER

N. Y. Times

THE FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE FOR THE BLIND

Seated on the couch (*left to right*) Mr. M. C. Migel, Helen Keller, Mr. William Nelson Cromwell. *To Mr. Migel's right*, Mrs. Macy; *to Mr. Cromwell's left*, Polly Thomson. *Standing behind Mr. Migel*, Mrs. Robert Irwin, *behind Helen*, Mr. Robert Irwin.

In dealing with the submerged and the handicapped they have a strength beyond that granted to most women. Strength and courage and an exquisite delicacy. And with it a mighty resilience and an unquenchable gaiety. Their home is a clearing house for unhappiness, but in a peculiar and special sense it is also a house of joy. A seeing person invited there for dinner for the first time may dread the occasion if he remembers that two of his three hostesses and all of the guests except himself (this is frequently the case) are blind, but the feeling gets no further than the threshold. He walks into a pleasant, softly lighted living room filled with merry talk and bright laughter where the ills of the body are lost in a shining freedom of spirit. He is swept into the buoyant current, and the courage of two brave women becomes somehow a part of his courage. He would be inhuman to escape it.

Hearing Helen, the blind remember that she is deaf; seeing her, the deaf remember that she is blind; the rest of us remember that she is both deaf and blind. And some of us remember that the teacher who made Helen possible gave her sight to the making. Generally Helen stands as a personification of both of them, but whether they are considered singly or together, the emotional impact is the same. Many have tried to put it into words. No one has ever done it better than Sir St. Clair Thomson when in the summer of 1932, in introducing Helen to the British Medical Association, he turned to her where she stood on the platform and quoted these lines of Maurice Baring's in honour of a young poet who died in the war:

Because of you we will be glad and gay,
Remembering you, we will be brave and strong;
And hail the advent of each dangerous day
And meet the last adventure with a song.

"I can't help being proud of her," her teacher said one day in a thrilling moment when she was caught off guard.

CHAPTER XXII
Twilight

"And what became of Annie Sullivan?"

This question has been asked in France, England, Scotland, Yugoslavia, and the United States with Mrs. Macy standing before the questioners. No doubt it has been asked in other countries too. Nearly everyone remembers that a girl by this name went to Alabama many years ago and set free the spirit of a child who was deaf and dumb; the devotion of these forty-six years is not so well known, and recently—since her public appearances have been fewer—Polly has to some extent taken her place in the popular mind. Reporters sometimes write her down as Anne Thomson, Polly Sullivan, and Anne Sullivan Thomson, and in face of the obvious fact that Polly is younger than Helen announce that it was she who went to Alabama when Helen was seven years old and took her education in charge.

Neither as Annie Sullivan nor as Mrs. Macy has Helen's teacher ever made any claims for herself as an educator or in any other capacity. She has never written down her theories in a compact handbook for the guidance of other teachers. Nor has she ever felt that she had any great message for the world. "If I had felt so," she says, "I should have left Helen long ago to preach it."

This silence about herself has made it difficult to form estimates of what she has done, but estimates have been made.

In the Sunday issue of the New York *Herald Tribune*, on September 21, 1930, Mr. Walter Pitkin had an article listing the living Americans who, in his opinion, had achieved most.

The most striking fact in our survey [he said] is that achievement of the very highest order is exceedingly rare; much rarer than genius indeed. The next most interesting aspect, I think, is the total lack of connection between achievement and fame or personal power.

He judged his candidates for distinction on four factors, "a clear, well conceived, large ambition," "apostolic zeal" in overcoming obstacles, thoroughness in accomplishing what was wanted, and the significance and human value of the success. He found four names to put in his first, or AAAA, group. Helen Keller's was one. The three others were Thomas A. Edison, Orville Wright, and Edward Acheson, inventor of carborundum. Mrs. Macy was placed in the second or AAA group along with ten others, including Charlie Chaplin, John Dewey, David Wark Griffith, Jane Addams, the Mayo brothers, Henry Ford, and the senior Rockefeller. Mr. Pitkin was somewhat doubtful about Mrs. Macy.

Indeed [he said] a pretty strong case might be put up in favour of promoting this extraordinary woman to the AAAA group. And there I might place her, but for my feeling that her efforts to overcome obstacles must have been incomparably less than those of Helen Keller; and I say that without in the least belittling them.

She has had few honours and little praise compared with what has been lavished upon Helen, and most of the honours that have come to her she has thrust aside or forgotten. Thoughtful appreciation has not been lacking, and it would be wrong to say that it has not pleased her. She is shy about accepting it ("shy as a chipmunk," Ned Holmes calls her), and it is too late now for any words to mean what they could have meant in the dark days of her struggle with Helen. One can only be thankful that Dr. Bell said them then.

Academic recognition did not come until more than a quarter of a century after the graduation from Radcliffe, and then it was not from Radcliffe. In December, 1930, Temple University, in Philadelphia, at the instance of Dr. A. Edward New-

ton and others, invited her and Helen to receive the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters on Founder's Day, February 16, 1931. Helen gladly accepted. She has always judged such tributes not for their value to herself but for the encouragement they may give to another who is handicapped. She had known and admired the founder of Temple, Dr. Russell Conwell, she liked the idea of the university which was established to give opportunity to working boys and girls, and she had found it inspiring to watch it grow from an earnest handful meeting in Dr. Conwell's rooms to a great university for men and women with hundreds of teachers and thousands of students. She urged Mrs. Macy to accept, but Mrs. Macy hesitated.

Mrs. Macy to Dr. Charles E. Beury, president of Temple:

93 Seminole Avenue, Forest Hills, L.I., N.Y.
December 17, 1930.

PRESIDENT CHARLES E. BEURY,
Temple University,
Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR PRESIDENT BEURY,

I received several days ago your very pleasant letter offering me the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Temple University. I should have answered it immediately, expressing my deep sense of the honour done me by such a thought, and the sincere regret I felt that such an honour was not for me. But Miss Keller entreated me so earnestly to reconsider my decision that I have carried your letter in my head and my heart for a week with the most genuine desire to catch myself in such a state of mind that I might write and tell you I would accept the degree.

But my decision remains unchanged. I cannot conscientiously accept the degree that you so graciously wish to confer upon me. It is a valuation to which I do not consider my education commensurate. All my life I have suffered in connection with my work from a sense of deficiency of equipment. To take pleasure in such a degree as you so graciously wish to confer upon me I should have to feel I deserved it. All the satisfaction that belongs to me—which I derive

from the fact that I have discharged my duty towards my beloved pupil Helen Keller not unsuccessfully—I shall realize when she is honoured. I have much remorse in resisting Helen Keller's pleading and the kindness of many friends, but one should not be prevailed upon to do something utterly against one's sense of the proprieties.

Please believe me, I am keenly sensible of your beautiful thought of me, especially as it is the first time an institution of learning has wished to recognize my work. Your faith in my fitness for the degree touches me profoundly, and my pride is augmented when two minds like yours and Dr. Newton's are moved by an acquaintance with my work to a friendly interest in me. Since I cannot conscientiously receive the degree, I assure you that your recognition of my dear pupil's accomplishments will bring me real happiness.

I repeat, this letter expresses the perfect sincerity of my attitude towards the Temple University degree, and my gratitude for your wish to honour me. With very kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,
(Signed)

But Mrs. Macy had not counted upon the force with which she was reckoning. It is a legend in Philadelphia that when Mr. Newton wants a thing he gets it, and Mr. Newton wanted her to have this degree. He gave her his reasons:

First: I regard Miss Keller as one of the most remarkable personalities now living, and I have always thought that what you have done with her was little, if any, less remarkable than what she was able to do for herself. To put it vulgarly, she was inside seeking to look out, whereas you were outside looking in. You could not have had the same longing for the light that she had. I am not alone in this feeling: it is the feeling of all who have given your achievement a moment's consideration.

Another reason why I trust you will accept the degree which Temple offers is this: it gives Temple an opportunity of announcing its wish to encourage rare achievement wherever it may be found, especially when the recipient of its honour occupies a position which makes it unlikely that she can ever do anything by way of return. Too many degrees are given by universities in the hope of receiving a quid pro quo. Temple is not moved by this. Its honour then you have no right to decline. May it not be that Miss Keller and your

many friends more correctly appraise the value of your work than you do?

Dr. Newton was to present both women for their degrees. He invited them to stay with him at his home, Oak Knoll, near Philadelphia, and made attractive plans for their entertainment. Mrs. Macy remained firm. The degree was not for her. She wrote Mr. Newton:

I hope you will, nevertheless, permit me to accompany Helen Keller and her secretary, Miss Thomson, when they go to Philadelphia on the 16th of February. I should indeed be grieved if declining the honour lost me the pleasure and benefit I should derive from being your guest on that occasion.

Whereupon the determined Mr. Newton wrote Helen:

I am strongly minded to discuss with Dr. Beury, President of Temple, forcibly conferring a degree upon Mrs. Macy. The more I think of this, the more the idea appeals to me.

It was this letter which made Mrs. Macy decide not to go to Philadelphia, or if she went, to go secretly.

Three honorary degrees were conferred in the Temple auditorium that morning, one of them upon Governor Pinchot, but the day was Helen's, and no one who saw her will ever forget the occasion. The other speakers all paused to shower praise upon her before making the speeches they had been asked to make, and when Mr. Newton's time came he found that what he had planned to say had already been said several times—very clumsily said, in his opinion. But he had not given up. He swept away from Helen and talked about Mrs. Macy and her voluntary entrance into the dark where Helen lived, declared that one way of settling important matters was to vote upon them, and asked all in the audience who felt that the degree should be conferred upon her by force, if necessary, to rise. Governor Pinchot had already made the same suggestion to Dr. Beury. Only one person remained seated, and that was

Mrs. Macy who, the night before, without even Helen and Polly knowing it, had slipped into Philadelphia with me. The response was unmistakable, and when Dr. Beury wrote to her after her return to Long Island offering to come to Forest Hills to confer the degree she felt that it would be uncivil to refuse any longer.

When she went to Philadelphia a year later to receive it the papers announced that HELEN KELLER was in the city to see her teacher honoured, and when the reporters came for interviews there was only one who talked with her; the others clustered around Helen. "Even at my coronation Helen is queen," she said, but she was a proud woman when she said it.

Mrs. Macy was embarrassed and unhappy. She can enjoy an honour which is given to Helen alone, but not to herself alone. Since this time, two other degrees have been offered her (with Helen not included in the invitations), and she has refused both of them. The twin personality which lives in Forest Hills is nearly always called Helen Keller (which Mrs. Macy thinks is fitting), but everyone who comes near it knows that there are two entities, separate and inseparable, like Damon and Pythias, Héloïse and Abélard, Beaumont and Fletcher, Plato and Socrates. When Helen was chosen by *Good Housekeeping* in 1931 as one of the twelve greatest living American women along with Jane Addams, Martha Berry, Cecelia Beaux, Madame Schumann-Heink, Dr. Florence Sabin, and half a dozen others, Miss Alice Booth, who wrote the article about her for the magazine, said that perhaps Helen Keller *and* Miss Sullivan should have been named as one of the twelve greatest American women, and Leon Gordon, the Russian, who painted the portrait which accompanied the article felt that if only one of them had to be selected it should have been Mrs. Macy. An artist himself, he appreciated her as an artist, a sculptress whose clay was Helen, a painter whose medium was words, a woman of monumental ability, a builder, a creator. His friend, Frazier

Hunt, in a radio talk given in November of the same year, called the personality for once Anne Sullivan Macy, but he spoke of the two women together.

During the last fifteen or twenty years [he said] I have met and talked to many of the great men and women of the world—statesmen, soldiers, presidents, kings, financiers, revolutionists, explorers, scientists, teachers, artists, poets—men and women of great and acknowledged accomplishments. But to me none of them compares to these two rare women, the heroines of this story. . . . It is the most beautiful story that I know of in the whole world.

In the summer of 1932 the two heroines and Polly Thomson (delightful Polly Thomson, Mr. Newton called her) sailed to Europe for the third time. The ancient university of Glasgow, which, since its founding in 1450, has seldom stooped to honour women, invited Helen to receive the degree of Doctor of Laws at their Commemoration Meeting on June 15th. It was the old story. Helen was headlined throughout England and Scotland as phenomenal, amazing, radiant, charming, triumphant, once more the wonder woman, the modern miracle. There were sixteen candidates for degrees on the morning that she received hers, including such distinguished men as Sir Alfred Ewing, President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and Roberto Alessandri, Professor of Surgery at the University of Rome, but the same thing happened here in the summer of 1932 that happened in Philadelphia in the winter of 1931.

Yesterday [said the Glasgow *Herald*] will long be remembered as Helen Keller's day. . . . It is no disrespect to the other distinguished graduates who were capped at a notable ceremony, to say that one of the happiest memories they will have is that it was their good fortune to receive their degrees on the occasion on which honour was paid to one who, partly by her own magnificent character, partly by the help of loving friends, has achieved what is little short of a miracle.

Chief of these loving friends was, of course, the teacher, and the degree, as Sir Robert Rait, Principal of the University said, is—

> . . . in essence, if not in form, a double honour. We honour the lady whose gallant courage and indomitable will have won an unprecedented and unexampled victory of the human intellect over the barriers created by the weakness of the human body, and, having secured for herself an abundant entrance into the regions of thought and knowledge long closed to the blind and the deaf, is devoting her life to the creation of like opportunities for her sisters and brothers, as they share in her affliction they may likewise share in her triumph. And in honouring her we honour also the friend and teacher whose devotion and whose genius rendered that triumph possible.

If Mrs. Macy and Helen and Polly had known (what they could have guessed) that the summer in Scotland and England was to be so wildly triumphant and strenuous, they might have stayed at home, for they were all three weary. Fatigue seems to have a large share in this story, but it is not possible to live at the pace at which these three women live without being tired a very great part of the time. They went over with two sensible plans, neither of which came to fruition. The first was to spend the month of May quietly in Looe. The second was to spend the months of August and September quietly in Memory Cottage near Canterbury in Kent.

At Looe they were greeted by press representatives and photographers and flooded with invitations. They had not been there many days before they discovered that they had to rise at six o'clock in the morning to have any time to themselves. Polly spent the day answering letters, while Mrs. Macy and Helen worked on speeches and articles. Helen's first official appearance was on June 10th when the teachers of the deaf and blind in Scotland presented her with the robes she was to wear at the capping ceremonies at the university. The impressive ceremonies at the university five days later were followed by a luncheon. Helen made a speech here, and another

speech the same day at Queen Margaret's, the "Radcliffe of Glasgow." The next day there was a sail down the Clyde with twelve hundred blind people and their guides. Helen made another speech. The Scottish Association of the New Church gave her a reception, and she made another speech. Dr. James Kerr Love gave her a birthday party, and she made another speech. There was a visit to their graces the Duke and Duchess of Montrose in Brodick Castle; a visit to the Burns country. Helen spoke in Bothwell Parish Church, where Polly's brother, R. J. Thomson, is minister, and had to address an overflow meeting outside when the regular service was done.

June 30th saw them in London. Under the auspices of the National Institute for the Blind Helen opened a school of massage for the blind; she visited schools for the blind and the deaf; she went to St. Dunstan's. Sir Arthur was dead, but she met the new head of the institution, a young blind man, Captain Ian Fraser, and she met Sir Arthur's wife, Lady Pearson. They went twice to Lady Astor's, and it was on one of these visits when they met George Bernard Shaw that proof was once more given the world that it is never wise to mix celebrities. When, after one of his crisp remarks, Lady Astor reminded him that Miss Keller was blind and deaf he replied, "All Americans are blind and deaf—and dumb." And though it has been protested that he said it to comfort her, it did not seem so to Helen, nor does it sound like the old fighting Shaw of the plays and the newspaper stories. They went to the House of Commons, the high moment of the summer for Annie Sullivan, when the first words she heard as she walked into its venerable halls were in stentorian tones, "I say Ireland will never submit!" Joe Devlin was speaking on the Irish annuities. What else they did during the ten days in London has faded into a blur. Helen made four or five appearances a day, and every time she made an appearance she made a speech.

When they ran away to Kent they found Memory Cottage charming as it had been described, couched on a Saxon foun-

dation and smothered with vines and flowers, but so tiny that they felt they were in a doll's house, so dark that on rainy days it was like a small overdecorated cave. Here they gave tea to the American Uniform Braille Committee which was in London to confer with the National Institute for the Blind on the question of uniform printing in England and the United States. Here Dr. Love and his wife came to see them, and Mr. Migel and Captain Van Beek of the *Roosevelt*, and here came hundreds of invitations from London, including one from Buckingham Palace. This was for July 21st. Before it arrived they were already scheduled to have lunch with Lady Paula Jones that day, to attend a reception given in Helen's honour by the National Union of Guilds for citizenship, to have tea with Dr. and Mrs. Waggett (friends of Lady Fairhaven, daughter of H. H. Rogers), tea again with Mr. Migel and his daughter Parmenia, and dinner with the Robert Irwins!

On July 27th Mrs. Macy and Helen spoke before the section of the British Medical Association which has for its province the ear, nose, and throat. Sir St. Clair Thomson presided. Later they had lunch with him at his home on Wimpole St., almost opposite the Barrett house. Dear Ned Holmes of the Cambridge and Forest Hills days came to see them, and Dr. Saybolt of Forest Hills. Sometimes it seemed as if they were entertaining or being entertained by half of America as well as most of England and Scotland. Helen's last public appearance in London was at the International Teachers' Convention where Mrs. Macy was to have spoken, but Mrs. Macy was so worn out by this time with the strain of light-hearted festivity and serious work that Helen had to speak for her. They cancelled all other engagements and fled to the highlands.

It was difficult to find a resting place, for it was the shooting season, but through Polly's brother they discovered an old farmhouse in South Arcan in the Muir of Ord in Ross-shire, on the Orrin River not far from Inverness. Here the days passed in comparative serenity. They visited Mrs. Carnegie in Skibo

Castle and Lord and Lady Aberdeen in the House of Cromar. Helen spoke before the Inverness Rotary Club and secured a promise from them to look after the blind. They met Sir Neville Wilkinson and saw Titania's Palace, the tiny doll's house through the exhibition of which he has raised £20,000 for the cripples in England.

It was while they were resting in the farmhouse that the Educational Institute of Scotland, with a rare perception of the "togetherness" of their work, paid Helen and her teacher a distinguished tribute by making both of them Honorary Fellows of the Institute. This Institute is representative of all classes and grades of teachers in Scotland, and the honorary fellowship is the highest honour they have to give, the highest educational honour which Scotland, a nation which still worships learning for its own sake, has to offer.

For Helen Adams Keller:

She having rendered Signal Service to the cause of education by showing that the outward reaching of the mind for knowledge, joined to indomitable will, is able to triumph over almost the utmost limits of sense disabilities. She has thereby brought inspiration and hope to all who sit in darkness and loneliness through afflictions of sense, and won for herself a world-wide and enduring fame. Though, as she tells us in her life story, isolation enfolds her, at times, like a cold mist, and "silence sits immense on her soul," she has the serene outlook of one

> *Whose high endeavours are an inward light*
> *That makes the path before her always bright.*

For Mrs. Anne Sullivan Macy:

She having rendered Signal Service to the cause of education by helping to liberate the imprisoned spirit of her pupil, Helen Adams Keller, an achievement demanding a devotion, patience, and resource without parallel. Mrs. Macy has shown herself to be a teacher of genius who made discriminate use of all known methods for reaching the child mind and herself devised many others which

anticipated some of the best features in present-day teaching practice. Dr. Keller, in the *Story of My Life*, has made generous recognition of "the debt immense of endless gratitude" she owes to Mrs. Macy and tells how the poet Whittier, a friend of both, once said to her, "She [Mrs. Macy] is thy spiritual liberator."

"And what became of Annie Sullivan?"

You will find her to-day most of the time alone in Forest Hills with the three dogs, Darky and Ben-sith, terriers, and Helga the Great Dane, who have come to take the place of Sieglinde; for she is no longer able to go regularly with Helen and Polly on their endless quest for funds for the blind. She is in pain much of the time, and there is only a dim flicker of sight left; but, because of the devoted care of Dr. Berens, it is enough to enable her to move about the house unattended, and when it is nourished with powerful drops it can still be stimulated into brief flashes of minute activity. She is nearly seventy, but the old fire burns high. The strength that has sustained her through all these years is undiminished. Like Helen's, it comes from an inner source, but unlike Helen's it is not serene. She is to-day as capricious and unmanageable as she was in 1881, when she fled from Tewksbury, or in 1887, when she went to Alabama, or at any other date that might be picked up along the line, and as unconquerable.

What she would like best is to begin all over again with another pupil, and when Mr. Charles Hayes of the American Foundation for the Blind discovered a neglected deaf and blind baby girl in Louisville, Ky., not many months ago, it was as if a new lamp had been lighted within her. She ached to take the baby to her heart, and it was with the greatest difficulty that her friends were able to persuade her that it was not a perfectly sane and practical plan for her to make the child a member of the household in Forest Hills. Little Patricia was finally placed in the capable hands of Miss Marguerite Manley at the Boston School for Blind Babies, where Mrs. Macy has since visited her, holding her in her arms with a feeling that life might be rising

from the source again. For it may be (who knows?) that this small atom lying helpless now at the gates of understanding will be the one to carry on that great tradition which no American would willingly let perish—the tradition of Laura Bridgman and Helen Keller. No one more devoutly hopes that this will be true than Helen's teacher, but she is willing now to leave the task to youth.

She does not believe that the frost of age is the crowning glory of life and makes no effort to persuade herself into such a belief. Old herself, for in her blindness she thinks of herself as old, she has the youthful Shelley's contempt for old age with

. . . its grey hair
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things.

From Brittany she wrote in 1930:

I feel wretchedly conscious of the dreadfulness of age. Is any old person really happy I wonder. Of course they pretend to be, but if they ever remember what they were like once they must shudder inwardly. I hate growing old. Only youth and life at the full tide are beautiful. A less brutal deity would have decreed that life should end with the offspring, as the moth dies in the splendour of its beauty when it has laid the eggs of future moths.

Like Shelley again, who had the good fortune to die as a man should, in the fullness of his youth and fame, she feels that the influence of age upon youth can only be harmful.

. . . It is unmeet
To shed on the brief flower of youth
The withering knowledge of the grave.

She expects no wisdom from the councils of the elders, even when she sits among them, but the woman who has lived with Helen Keller for nearly fifty years is not without infinite faith in the possibilities of mankind. She expects miracles to continue, she who has known and taken part in one, and she looks for the

others where she found the first: in youth. She believes in the power of the young to break through whatever restrictions their elders try to impose upon them, and the mind that came through the almshouse at Tewksbury unwarped and clean is not afraid of what environment can do. She is not afraid of truth in any of its manifestations, and she does not believe that intelligent men and women should abstain from thinking and writing because there is somewhere a delicate sensibility they may offend. Let them think, let them write, let them speak, and let the delicate sensibility be damned. Let not life be shaped in the image of the weak and handicapped.

Her interests to-day are as wide as the world, and she is at home everywhere. She has met Presidents and kings, thieves and murderers, paupers and millionaires. She is at home with bootleggers and cooks, princes and dukes, newspaper men, truck drivers, artists, and inebriates. She has a rich Rabelaisian gusto for life which nothing has ever spoiled, and she likes vivid personalities. The years at Tewksbury gave her that. Simple orderly folk going quietly about their ways are as colourless to her now as the teachers at Perkins were to her as a girl when she contrasted them with the women she had known in the almshouse. She likes the rich, warm tide of life where it strikes the rapids, not where it runs smooth.

She manages to keep up with what is happening in Moscow, in Rome, in Belgrade, in Paris, London, New York, and Washington. The old Irish interest in politics has not died, nor has the old Irish love for political disturbance, for all kinds of disturbance, in fact. Peace may be for others, never for her.

This does not mean that her life is all turmoil. She is anchored to two great rocks of faith. One is that obstinate belief in people —the mass of people—which no number of betrayals or disappointments has ever been able to kill. It is this which keeps alive her faith in the high destiny of mankind. Youth will take care of the world if age will not, and while a heavier responsibility rests upon the young of to-day than upon those of any

preceding generation, she is confident, this young Irishwoman, that they will be able to meet it.

> Out of the vivid experience of living [she says] they will gain strength to follow the flame that is within them—the flame that is youth, renewal, and eternal as life itself. To renew the world, to revivify purpose and noble ideals—that is their problem, and they will be equal to it. It is a question of knowing something, believing something, and doing something. . . . There is a new idea of freedom abroad. Governments and schools are fighting it, but it has already gone too deep into human consciousness for authority to police it. And no one who knows the invincibleness of an idea can doubt that it will finally emerge victorious and triumphant in every land, that history will repeat itself, that the force of events will carry mankind forward.

The manifestation of this spirit of freedom and renewal are sometimes disturbing, as in Russia, but there is no fresh experiment in government that comes into the world, in Russia, in Italy, or in the South Sea Islands, without commanding her respect and awakening her hope. Even if it fails, it will have tried, and that is worth something. A nation rebuilding itself, creating—this is the highest experience that life has to offer her, except one.

That one is her other rock of faith—Helen. All of her interests, all of her life comes to a focus at this point. "What a blind deaf person needs," she says, "is not a teacher but another self." She has been Helen's other self. She has built Helen into what she is, and has given her life to do it, but she has had her reward, for she has never asked for anything beyond the satisfaction that she has derived from knowing that the work was well done. She has never minimized Helen's share in it, and when she thanked the members of the Educational Institute of Scotland for uniting her name and Helen's in "its golden clasp of praise," she said, "I have never thought that I deserved more praise than other teachers who give the best they have to their pupils. If their earnest efforts have not released an

Ariel from the imprisoning oak, it is no doubt because there has not been an Ariel to release." If Helen had been Caliban instead of Ariel, Annie Sullivan would have gone to Alabama just the same, but she would not have come out with Helen Keller as she is known to the world to-day. Even Prospero, the magician, could not make Caliban other than a monster.

To the members of the Educational Institute she spoke of the energy she has seen teachers expend upon hopelessly dull and backward children, renouncing the pleasures of the world to devote themselves to awakening minds which, even awake, were not in any way remarkable or even interesting. All over the world women are labouring "with Christ-like love and patience" to save the neglected, backward, afflicted, and unhappy children of the human race. "Are not such teachers," she asked, "more deserving of gratitude and honour than one whose wonderful task was to release the bright intelligence of a Helen Keller?"

It is sometimes asked whether it was worth while for one person so to submerge herself in another, and the question is sometimes answered in the negative. Could not Annie Sullivan have done better by the world and in the world if she had scattered her abilities? She does not think so. It is futile to speculate.

That she has stayed with Helen all these years is a greater wonder to Helen than to anyone else, and it is with a humble and contrite heart that Helen reflects upon what the years have cost her teacher, the opportunities she might have had, the friends she might have enjoyed, the sight that might still be hers, the other children she might have taught. And yet for Helen life would not be life nor heaven heaven without her teacher. She never speaks without saying that all she has done has been done through her, she never writes of herself without writing of her, and when she goes to her attic study to compose articles, or to answer letters, or to shape appeals, her fingers stray from the work in hand to little songs of love and devotion which drop into her teacher's lap when Helen places the rest of her

work there. The words of the songs are different, but the burden is always the same:

Teacher, and yet again
Teacher—and that was all.
It will be my answer
In the dark
When Death calls.

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